PERSPECTIVES: AN OPEN INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

SECOND EDITION

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GENDER AND SEXUALITY

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Learning Objectives

- Identify ways in which culture shapes sex/gender and sexuality.

- Describe ways in which gender and sexuality organize the societies in which we live.

- Understand, through examples, the varied ways cultures can construct gender and sexuality.

- Analyze how anthropology as a discipline is affected by gender ideology and gender norms.

- Evaluate our cultural "origin" stories against actual anthropological data.

INTRODUCTION: SEX AND GENDER ACCORDING TO ANTHROPOLOGISTS

Anthropologists[1] are fond of pointing out that much of what we take for granted as "natural" in our lives is actually cultural—it is not grounded in nature or in biology but invented by humans.[2] Because culture is invented, it takes different forms in different places and changes over time. Living in the twenty-first century, we have witnessed how rapidly and dramatically culture can change, from ways of communicating to the emergence of same-sex marriage. Similarly, many of us live in culturally diverse settings and experience how varied human cultural inventions can be.

We readily accept that clothing, language, and music are cultural—invented, created, and alter-able—but often find it difficult to accept that gender and sexuality are not natural but deeply embedded

in culture. We struggle with the idea that the division of humans into two and only two categories, "male" and "female," is not universal. How can male and female be cultural concepts that take different forms and have different meanings cross-culturally? And human sexuality, rather than being natural, be one of the most culturally shaped of all human capacities. The concept of humans as either "heterosexual" or "homosexual" is also a historically specific cultural invention.

Part of the problem is that gender has a biological component, unlike other cultural creations such as a sewing machine, cell phone, or poem. We do have bodies and there are some male-female differences, including in reproductive capacities and roles, albeit far fewer than we have been taught. Similarly, sexuality, sexual desires and responses, are partially rooted in human natural capacities.

In many ways, sexuality and gender are like food. We have a biological need and urge to eat and we have the capacity to enjoy it. What constitutes "food," what is "delicious" or "repulsive," the contexts and meanings that surround food and human eating—those aspects are cultural. For example, why aren't perfectly edible animals such as rats, bumblebees, and cats considered food in the United States? The cultural concept of "food" also involves elaborate conventions about eating: how, when, with whom, where, using what "utensils," for what purposes? A "romantic dinner" at a "gourmet restaurant" is a complex cultural invention.

Gender and sexuality, then, like eating, is partially about biology. But cultures, over time, have erected complex and elaborate edifices, creating systems of meaning that often barely resemble what is natural and innate. We experience gender and sexuality largely through the prism of the cultures to which we have been exposed and in which we have been raised.

In this chapter, we are asking you to reflect deeply on how what we have been taught to think of as natural, that is, our sex, gender, and our sexuality, is, in fact, profoundly shaped by our culture.

One reason cultural norms feel so natural is that we learn them the way we learn our native language: without formal instruction, in social contexts, picking them up from others around us, without thinking. Soon, they become deeply embedded in our brains. We no longer think consciously about what the sounds mean when someone says "hello" …unless we do not speak English. Nor is it difficult to tell the time on a clock even though "time" and "clocks" are complex cultural inventions.

The same principles apply to gender and sexuality. We learn very early (by at least age three) about the categories of gender in our culture—that individuals are either male or female and that elaborate beliefs, behaviors, and meanings are associated with each gender. We can think of this complex set of ideas as a **gender ideology** or a **cultural model of gender**. All societies have gender ideologies, just as they have belief systems about other significant areas of life, such as health and disease, the natural world, and social relationships, including family.

For an activity related to this section, see Activity 1: How Does Gender Shape Your Life? on the Teaching & Learning Resources section of the Perspectives website. https://perspectives.americananthro.org/teaching/Gender-and-Sexuality-Learning-Resources.pdf

FOUNDATIONS OF THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF GENDER

Gender Ideologies, Biology, and Culture

Gender vs. Sex

Words can reveal cultural beliefs. A good example is the term "sex." In the past, sex referred both to

sexuality and to someone's biologic sex: male or female. Today, although sex still refers to sexuality, "gender" now means the categories male, female, or increasingly, other gender possibilities. Why has this occurred?

The change in terminology reflects profound alterations in gender ideology in the United States (and elsewhere). In the past, influenced by Judeo-Christian religion and nineteenth and twentieth century scientific beliefs, biology was literally considered to be destiny. Males and females, at least "normal" males and females, were thought to be born with different intellectual, physical, and moral capacities, preferences, tastes, personalities, and predispositions for violence and suffering.[3]

Ironically, many cultures, including European Christianity in the Middle Ages, viewed women as having a strong, often "insatiable" sexual "drive" and capacity. But by the nineteenth century, women and their sexuality were largely defined in reproductive terms, as in their capacity to "carry a man's child." Even late-twentieth-century human sexuality texts often referred only to reproductive systems, to genitals as reproductive organs, and excluded the clitoris and other female organs of sexual pleasure that had no reproductive function. For women, the primary, if not sole, legitimate purpose of sexuality was reproduction.[4]

Nineteenth and mid-twentieth century European and U.S. gender ideologies linked sexuality and gender in other ways.[5] Sexual preference—the sex to whom one was attracted—was assumed to be solely heterosexual, at least among "normal" humans. Normal according to mid-twentieth century Freudian-influenced psychology, was defined largely by whether one adhered to conventional gender roles for males and females. So conventionally "masculine" men were "naturally" attracted to "feminine" women and vice versa. Homosexuality, too, was depicted not just as a sexual preference but as gender-inappropriate role behavior, down to gestures and color of clothing.[6] This is apparent in old stereotypes of gay men as "effeminate" (acting like a female, wearing "feminine" fabrics or colors such as silk and pink, and participating in professions like ballet) and of lesbian women as "butch" (cropped hair, riding motorcycles, wearing leather—prototypical masculinity). Once again, separate phenomena—sexual preference and gender role performance—were conflated because of beliefs that rooted both in biology. Abnormality in one sphere (sexual preference) was linked to abnormality in the other sphere (gendered capacities and preferences).

These gender and sexual ideologies were based on **biological determinism**. According to this theory, males and females were supposedly born fundamentally different reproductively and in other major capacities and preferences. They were by nature (biologically) sexually attracted to each other, although women's sexual desire was underdeveloped and reproductively oriented.

Rejecting Biological Determinism

Decades of research on gender and sexuality, including by feminist anthropologists, has challenged these old theories, particularly biological determinism. We now understand that cultures, not nature, create the gender ideologies that go along with being born male or female and the ideologies vary widely, cross-culturally. What is considered "man's work" in some societies, such as carrying heavy loads, or farming, can be "woman's work" in others. What is "masculine" and "feminine" varies: pink and blue, for example, are culturally invented gender-color linkages, and skirts and "make-up" can be worn by men, indeed by warriors. Hindu deities, male and female, are highly decorated and difficult to distinguish, at least by conventional masculinist U.S. stereotypes (see examples and Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Hindu male deity Vishnu and his many "avatars" or forms (all male).

Figure 2. Hindu Deities: Vishnu, goddess Lakshmi, and Vishnu's other forms.

Women can be thought of as stronger ("tougher," more "rational") than men. Phyllis Kaberry, an anthropologist who studied the Nsaw of Cameroon in the 1940s, said males in that culture argued that land preparation for the rizga crop was "a woman's job, which is too strenuous for the men" and that "women could carry heavy loads because they had stronger foreheads."[7] Among the Aka who live in the present-day Central African Republic, fathers have close, intimate, relationships with infants, play major roles in all aspects of infant-care, and can sometimes produce breast milk.[8] As for sexual desires, research on the human sexual response by William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson established that men and women have equal biological capacities for sexual pleasure and orgasm and that, because males generally ejaculate simultaneously with orgasm, it is easier for women than men to have multiple orgasms.[9]

Gender: A Cultural Invention and a Social Role

Biologic sex is a different phenomenon than **gender**.[10] Gender is a set of culturally invented expectations. It constitutes a role one assumes, learns, and performs, more or less consciously. It is an "identity" one can in theory choose, at least in some societies, although there is often tremendous pressure, as in the United States, to conform to the gender role and identity linked to your biologic sex.

This is a profound transformation in how we think about both gender and sexuality. The reality of human biology is that males and females are shockingly similar.[11] There is arguably more variability *within* than *between* each gender, especially taking into account variations in physical traits among human populations globally.[12] Notice, for example, the range of heights in the two photos of U.S. college students shown in Figures 3 and 4. Which gender is "taller"? Compared to whom? In what ethnic group? What other biological traits in this picture differ across ethnic populations but not between males and females?

Biology does not exist in a vacuum. Biological traits, including gender differences, are influenced by culture. Height is affected by diet and access to food, both linked to socioeconomic status. U.S.-born children of immigrants are often taller than their parents. But gender also impacts height (and weight), especially in son-preferring cultures where daughters from poorer families may be fed less than sons. Strength is another capacity influenced by diet and activity. Girls, especially from well-off families, traditionally did not engage in activities that developed their strength and bone mass. But this has changed, as we saw in the 2020 Olympics games. Women are now stronger…and like men, do body building. Other biological traits, like body hair, can, through cultural means, be used to exaggerate gender differences, whether through growing beards or using shaving or waxing to remove body hair.

Since so much of what has been defined as biological is actually cultural, or has a major cultural component, the possibilities for transformation and change are nearly endless! That can be liberating, especially when we are young and want to create identities that fit our particular configuration of abilities and preferences. It can also be upsetting to people who have deeply internalized and who want to maintain the old gender ideology.

Figure 3: Gender variability: students at San Jose State University with Dr. Carol Mukhopadhyay.

Figure 4: Gender variability: students at Michigan State University, Kalamazoo with Dr. Carol Mukhopadhyay.

The Gender Binary and Beyond

We anthropologists, as noted earlier, love to shake up notions of what is natural and normal. One common assumption is that all cultures divide human beings into two and only two genders, a **binary** or dualistic model of gender. However, in some cultures gender is more fluid and flexible, allowing individuals born as one biologic sex to assume another gender or creating more than two genders from which individuals can select. Examples of non-binary cultures come from pre-contact Native America. Anthropologists such as Ruth Benedict long ago identified a phenomenon of "two-spirit" people, individuals who do not comfortably conform to the gender roles and gender ideology normally associated with their biologic sex. The Zuni people of New Mexico, beginning in the pre-contact era, lived in a relatively gender-egalitarian horticultural society. Individuals could choose an alternative role of "not-men" or "not-women." A two-spirited Zuni man would do the work and wear clothing normally associated with females, having shown a preference for female-identified activities and symbols at an early age. In some, but not all cases, they would marry a man. Early European ethnocentric reports often described it as a form of homosexuality. Anthropologists suggested more-complex motivations, including dreams of selection by spirits, individual psychologies, biological characteristics, and negative aspects of male roles (e.g., warfare). Most significantly, these alternative gender roles were acceptable, publicly recognized, and sometimes venerated.[13]

Less is known about additional gender roles available to biological females, although stories of "manly hearted women" suggest a parallel among some Native American groups. For example, a Kutenai woman known to have lived in 1811 was originally married to a French-Canadian man but then returned to the Kutenai and assumed a male gender role, changing her name to Kauxuma nupika (Gone-to-the-Spirits), becoming a spiritual prophet, and eventually marrying a woman.[14]

A well-known example of a non-binary gender system is found among the Hijra in India. Often called a **third gender**, these individuals are usually biologically male but adopt female clothing, gestures, and names; may eschew sexual desire and sexual activity; and go through religious rituals that give them certain divine powers, including blessing or cursing couples' fertility and performing at weddings and births. Hijra sometimes undergo voluntary surgical removal of genitals through a "nirvan" or rebirth operation. Some hijra are males born with ambiguous external genitals, such as a particularly small penis or testicles that did not fully descend.[15]

Research has shown that individuals with ambiguous genitals, sometimes called "intersex," are surprisingly common. Scholars estimate that intersex individuals constitute at least two percent of human

births.[16] So what are cultures to do when faced with an infant or child who cannot easily be "sexed?" Some cultures, including the United States, used to force children into one of the two binary categories, even if it required surgery or hormone therapy. But in other places, like India and among the Isthmus Zapotec in southern Oaxaca, Mexico, they created a third gender category with an institutional identity and role to perform in society.[17]

These cross-cultural examples demonstrate that the traditional rigid binary gender model in the United States is neither universal nor necessary. While all cultures recognize at least two biological sexes, usually based on genitals visible at birth, and have created at least two gender roles, many cultures go beyond the binary model, offering a third or fourth gender category. Other cultures allow individuals to adopt, without sanctions, a gender role that is not congruent with their biological sex. In short, biology need not be destiny when it comes to gender roles, as we are increasingly discovering in the United States and as we will discuss later in this chapter.

Variability Among Binary Cultures

Even societies with a binary gender system exhibit enormous variability in the meanings and practices associated with being male or female. Sometimes male-female distinctions pervade virtually all aspects of life, structuring space, work, social life, communication, body decoration, and expressive forms such as music. For instance, both genders may farm, but may have separate fields for "male" and "female" crops and gender-specific crop rituals. Or, the village public space may be spatially segregated with a "men's house" (a special dwelling only for men, like a "men's club") and a "women's house." In some societies, even when married couples occupy the same house, the space within the house is divided into male and female areas.[18]

Women and men can also have gender-specific religious rituals and deities and use gender-identified tools. There are cases of male and female foods, rains, dances, hairstyles, and communication forms (including words, verb forms, pronouns, inflections, and writing systems); one example is the Nu Shu writing system used by some women in parts of China in the twentieth century).[19]Gender ideologies can emphasize differences in character, capacities, and morality, sometimes portraying males and females as "opposite" poles on a continuum.

In societies that are highly segregated by gender, gender relationships sometimes may be seen as hostile or oppositional with one of the genders (usually female) viewed as potentially threatening. Female bodily fluids, such as menstrual blood and vaginal secretions, can be dangerous, damaging to men, "impure," and "polluting," especially in ritual contexts. In other cases, however, menstrual blood is associated with positive power. A girl's first menstruation may be celebrated publicly with elaborate community rituals, as among the Bemba in southern Africa, and subsequent monthly flows bring special privileges.[20] Men in some small-scale societies go through ritualized nose-bleeding, sometimes called "male menstruation," though the meanings are quite complex.[21]

Gender Relations: Separate and Unequal

Of course, gender-differentiation is not unique to small-scale societies. Virtually all major world religions have traditionally segregated males and females spatially and "marked" them in other ways. Look at eighteenth- and nineteenth- century churches, which had gender-specific seating; at contemporary Saudi Arabia, Iranian, and conservative Malaysian mosques; and at Jewish Orthodox Jewish synagogues today in Israel and the United States.

Ambivalence and even fear of sexuality, especially female sexuality, and negative associations with

bodily fluids, such as menstrual blood, has been widespread in the world's major religions. Engaging in sexual relations when a woman is menstruating is often discouraged if not forbidden. Orthodox Jewish women were not even to sleep in the same bed as their husbands during menstruation. In Kypseli, Greece, menstruating women supposedly could cause wine to go bad.[22] In some Catholic Portuguese villages, menstruating women were restricted from preparing fresh pork sausages or even being in the room where the sausages are made. Their presence was thought to cause the pork to spoil. Contact with these women also supposedly wilts plants and causes inexplicable movements of objects.[23] Orthodox forms of Hinduism prohibit menstruating women from activities such as cooking and attending temple.

These traditions are being challenged. A 2016 British Broadcasting Company (BBC) television program, for example, described "Happy to Bleed," a movement in India to change negative attitudes about menstruation and eliminate the ban on menstruating-age women entering the famous Sabriamala Temple in Kerala.[24]

Emergence of Public (Male) vs. Domestic (Female) Spheres

In large, stratified and centralized societies—that is, the powerful empires (so-called civilizations) that have dominated much of the world for the past several thousand years—a public vs. private or domestic distinction appears. The public, extra-family sphere of life is a relatively recent development, given our long history as a species. But it goes back to at least ancient Greece. And most of us have grown up around cities and towns with their obvious public spaces, physical manifestations of the political, economic, and other extra-family institutions that characterize large-scale societies. In such settings, it is easy to identify the domestic or private spaces families occupy, but a similar public-domestic distinction exists in villages. The public sphere is associated with, and often dominated by, males. The domestic sphere, in contrast, is primarily associated with women—though it, too, can be divided into male and female spheres. In India, for example, where households frequently consist of multi-generational groups of male siblings and their families, there are spaces where men congregate, smoke pipes, chat, and meet visitors. Women's spaces typically focus around the kitchen or cooking hearth (if outside) or at other sites of women's activities.[25] In some cases, an inner court is the women's area while the outer porch and roads that connect the houses are male spaces. In some Middle Eastern villages, women create over-the-roof paths for visiting each other without going "outside" into male spaces.[26]

The gender division between public and private/domestic, however, is as symbolic as it is spatial, often emphasizing a gender ideology of social separation between males and females (except young children), social regulation of sexuality and marriage, and male rights and control over females (wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers). It manifests as separate spaces in mosques, sex-segregated schools, and separate "ladies' compartments" on trains, as in India (Figure 5).

Of course, it is impossible to separate the genders completely. Rural women pass through the more-public spaces of a village to fetch water and firewood and to work in agricultural fields. Women shop in public markets, though that can be a "man's job." As more girls attend school in India and elsewhere, they take public transportation and traverse public "male" spaces even if they travel to all-girl schools (Figure 6). At college, they may be immersed in and even live on campuses where men predominate, especially if studying engineering, computer science, or other technical subjects (Figure 7). This can severely limit girls' educational and occupational choices, particularly for girls who come from relatively conservative families or regions.[27]

Figure 5: A women-only train car in India. Photograph by Ajay Tallam, 2007.

One way women navigate male spaces is by adopting routes, behavior (avoiding eye contact), and/or clothing that create separation.[28] The term "purdah," the separation or segregation of women from men, literally means "veiling," although other devices can be used. In nineteenth century Jaipur, Rajasthan, royal Rajput women inhabited the inner courtyard spaces of the palace. But an elaborate false building front, the hawa mahal, allowed them to view the comings and goings on the street without being exposed to the public male gaze.

As demand for educating girls has grown in traditionally sexually segregated societies, all-girl schools have been constructed (Figure 6), paralleling processes in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe and the United States. At the university level, however, prestigious schools offering high-demand subjects such as engineering may be all-male, excluding women as Harvard once did.[29] In other cases, there are no female faculty members to teach traditionally male subjects like engineering at all-women colleges. In Saudi Arabia, women's universities have taught courses using closed-circuit television to avoid violating norms of sexual segregation, particularly for young, unmarried women.[30] In countries such as India, gynecologists and obstetricians have been predominantly female, in part because families object to male doctors examining and treating women. Thus, in places that do not have female physicians, women's health can suffer.

Figure 6: All-girls school in Bangalore, India. Photograph by Carol Mukhopadhyay, 1989.

Figure 7: Management studies students, CUSAT-Cochin University of Science and Technology, Kerala, India. Photograph by Mukhopadhyay, 1989.

Sanctions, Sexuality, Honor, and Shame

Penalties for deviating from the rules of social separation vary across and within cultures. In small communities, neighbors and extended family kin can simply report inappropriate behavior, especially between unmarried young adults, to other family members. More severe and sometimes violent responses by family members can occur, especially if the family's "honor" is involved—that is, if the young adults, especially girls, engage in activities that would "shame" or dishonor the family. Honor and shame are complex concepts that are often linked to sexuality, especially female sexuality, and to behavior by family members that involves or hints at sexual impropriety. The Turkish film *Mustang*, nominated for the 2016 best foreign film Academy Award, offers a good illustration of how concepts of sexualized honor and shame operate on the lives of young women.

We hear in the news of "honor killings" carried out by conservative Muslims in countries such as Pakistan and powerfully portrayed in documentaries such as *A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness* (2015).[31] But it is not just Islam. Some orthodox sectors of major religions, including Christianity,

Judaism, and Hinduism, may hold similar views about "honor" and "shame" and impose sometimes violent sanctions against those who violate sexuality-related codes. The brutal 2012 gang rape-murder of a young woman on a bus in Delhi, though perpetrated by strangers, was rationalized by the men who committed the crime (and their defense attorney) as a legitimate response to the woman's "shameful" behavior—traveling on a bus at night with a male friend, implying sexual impropriety.[32]

Social separation, sex-segregated schools, and penalties for inappropriate sexual behavior have also existed in the United States and Europe, especially among upper-strata women for whom female "purity" was traditionally emphasized. Chastity belts in Europe, whether or not actually used, symbolized the idea that a woman's sexuality belonged solely to her husband, thus precluding her from engaging not only in premarital and extra-marital sex but also in masturbation (Figure 8).[33] In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, set in mid-sixteenth century Massachusetts, Hester was forced to wear a scarlet A on her dress and to stand on a public scaffold for three hours a day, a relatively nonviolent but powerful form of shaming and punishment. Stoning women to death for sexually inappropriate behavior, especially adultery, and other violent sanctions may have occurred in some European Christian and Jewish communities.

Rape, even in the context of war, frequent in the past and presently, can bring shame to the victim and her family, particularly in sexually conservative societies. During the 1971 Bangladesh war of independence against Pakistan, some East Bengali women raped by soldiers were ostracized by their families because of the "shame" it had brought. This has occurred in other societies where family "honor" is threatened by non-marital female sexual activity, even if it is non-consensual and involves assault.[34]
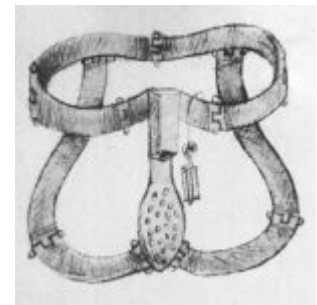

Figure 8: A sketch of a chastity belt, c. 1405.

Alternative Models of Gender: Complementary and Fluid

Not all binary cultures are segregated by gender; nor does hostility necessarily accompany gender separation. Nor are all binary cultures deeply concerned with regulating female sexuality and marriage. Premarital and extra-marital sex can even be common and acceptable, as among the !Kung San and Trobriand Islanders.[35] And men are not always clearly ranked over women as they typically are in stratified large-scale centralized societies with **patriarchal** systems. Instead, the two genders can be seen as complementary, equally valued and both recognized as necessary to society.

Different need not mean unequal. The Lahu of southwest China and Thailand exemplify a complementary gender system in which men and women have distinct expected roles but a male-female pair is necessary to accomplish most daily tasks (Figure 9). A male-female pair historically took responsibility for local leadership. Male-female **dyads** completed daily household tasks in tandem and worked together in the fields. The title of anthropologist Shanshan Du's book, *Chopsticks Only Work in Pairs* (1999), encapsulates how complementary gender roles defined Lahu society. A single chopstick is not very useful; neither is a single person, man or woman, in a dual-focused society.[36]

Figure 9: Lahu farmers in Chiangmai, Thailand.

Like the Lahu, the nearby Na believe men and women both play crucial roles in a family and house-hold. Women are associated with birth and life while men take on tasks such as butchering animals and preparing for funerals (Figures 10 and 11). Every Na house has two large pillars in the central hearth room, one representing male identity and one representing female identity. Both are crucial, and the house might well topple symbolically without both pillars. As sociologist Zhou Huashan explained in his 2002 book about the Na, this is a society that "values women without diminishing men."[37]

Figure 10: A Na woman, Sigih Lamu, weeds rice seedlings outside her family's home in southwest China's Yunnan Province. Photograph by Tami Blumenfield, 2002.

Figure 11: Na men carry a wooden structure to be used at a funeral. Photograph by Tami Blumenfield, 2002.

Anthropologists have also encountered relatively androgynous gender-binary cultures. In these cultures, some gender differentiation exists but "gender bending" and role-crossing are frequent, accepted, and reflect circumstances and individual capacities and preferences. Examples are the !Kung San mentioned earlier, Native American Washoe in the United States, some contemporary European societies such as Sweden and Finland and, increasingly, the United States.[38] Emerging twenty-first century gender ideologies tend to emphasize commonality, not difference: shared human traits, flexibility, fluidity, and individual expression.

Even cultures with well-defined gender roles do not necessarily view them as fixed, biologically rooted, permanent, "**essentialist**," or "naturalized" as occurred in the traditional gender ideology in the United States.[39] Gender may not even be an identity in a psychological sense but, rather, a social role one assumes in a particular social context just as one moves between being a student, a daughter, an employee, a wife or husband, president of the bicycle club, and a musician.

Cultures also change over time through trade, conquest, colonialism, globalization, immigration, and, especially, films and other popular mass media. Within every culture, there is diversity by class, ethnicity, religion, region, education level, and generation, as well as diversity related to more-individual family circumstances, predilections, and experiences. Gender expectations also vary with one's age and stage in life as well as one's social role, even within the family (e.g., "wife" vs. "sister" vs. "mother" vs. "mother-in-law" and "father" vs. "son" vs. "brother" vs "father-in-law"). Finally, people can appear to conform to cultural norms but find ways of working around or ignoring them.

Even in highly male-dominated, sexually segregated societies, women find ways to pursue their own goals, to be actors, and to push the boundaries of the gender system. Among Egyptian Awlad ʿAli Bedouin families, women rarely socialized outside their home compounds or with unrelated men. But within their spheres, they freely interacted with other women, could influence their husbands, and wrote and sang poetic couplets as expressive outlets.[40] In some of the poorest and least-developed areas of central India, where **patrilocal** [41]extended-family male-controlled households reign, activist Sampat Pal has organized local rural women to combat violence based on dishonor and gender. Her so-called

"Gulabi Gang," the subject of two films, illustrates both the possibilities of resistance and the difficulties of changing a deeply embedded system based on gender, caste, and class system (Figure 12).[42]

For a related activity, see Activity 2: Understanding Gender from a Martian Perspective, on the Teaching & Learning Resources section of the Perspectives website. See https://perspectives.americananthro.org/teaching/Gender-and-Sexuality-Learning-Resources.pdf

Figure 12: Gulabi Gang in India.

Unraveling Our Gender Myths: Primate Roots, "Man the Hunter," and Other "Origin Stories" of Gender and Male Dominance

> Even unencumbered by pregnancy or infants, a female hunter would be less fleet, generally less strong, possibly more prone to changes in emotional *tonus* as a consequence of the estrus cycle, and less able to adapt to changes in temperature than males.[43]
> —U.S. anthropologist, 1969

> Women don't ride motorcycles because they can't; they can't because they are not strong enough to put their legs down to stop it.[44]
> —Five-year-old boy, Los Angeles, 1980

> Men hunted because women were not allowed to come out of their houses and roam about in forests.[45]
> —Pre-college student in India, 1990

All cultures have "creation" stories. Many contain elaborate descriptions of the origins of males and females, their gender-specific traits, their relationships and sexual proclivities, and, sometimes, how one gender came to "dominate" the other. Our culture is no different. The Judeo-Christian Bible, like the Koran and other religious texts, addresses origins and gender (think of Adam and Eve), and traditional folk tales, songs, dances, and epics, such as the Ramayana in Hinduism and Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, treat similar themes.

Science, too, has sought to understand gender. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,

scientists immersed in Darwinian theories began to explore the evolutionary roots of what they assumed to be universal: male dominance. Of course, scientists, like the rest of us, view the world partially through their own cultural and gender lenses. Prior to the 1970s, most researchers were male so it is not surprising that U.S. (and European) theories reflected prevailing male-oriented folk beliefs about gender.[46]

The Hunting Way of Life "Molds Man" (and Woman)

The most popular and persistent theories argued that male dominance is universal, rooted in species-wide gendered biological traits that we acquired, first as part of our primate heritage, and then as we evolved from apes into humans. A crucial part of the story is the emergence of "the hunting way of life", with a primarily meat diet obtained through planned, large-scale, all-male cooperative hunts; and a social organization consisting of a stable home base, a monogamous nuclear family, and females primarily engaged in infant-childcare. This assertedly produced our human biological traits: larger, more complex brains, language, upright posture (unique foot and stride), "nakedness" (re: body hair), long infant dependency, and the loss of "estrus" (ovulation-related female sexual arousal, including visual signs, as in the baboon in Figure 13), making females sexually "receptive" throughout the monthly cycle. Sex became "sexier" with the evolution of frontal sex and fleshier breasts, buttocks, and genitals, especially the human penis. Making sex sexier, some speculated, cemented the male-female pair-bond, helping to keep the man "around" and the family unit stable.[47]
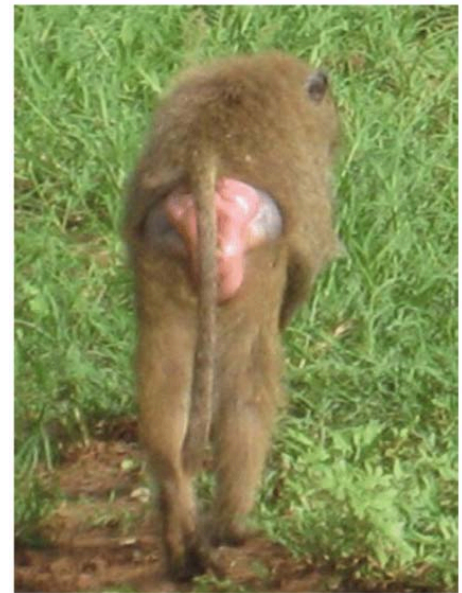

Figure 13: Female baboon in estrus. Photo: Mukhopadhyay

Hunting purportedly created a world view in which the flight of animals from humans seemed natural and (male) aggression became normal, easy to learn, rewarded, and enjoyable. War, some even suggested, might psychologically be a form of hunting and thus pleasurable for male participants.[48] Contemporary humans, according to these theories, cannot escape our hunting past even though we live in cities, stalk nothing but parking places, and omit meat from our diets.

> The biology, psychology, and customs that separate us from the apes—all these we owe to the hunters of time past. And, although the record is incomplete and speculation looms larger than fact, for those who would understand the origin and nature of human behavior there is no choice but to try to understand "Man the Hunter."
> —Washburn and Lancaster (1974)[49]

Gender roles and male dominance, too, were assertedly part of this evolutionary heritage. Males evolved to be food-providers—stronger, more aggressive, more effective leaders with bonding capacities, planning skills, and technological inventiveness (tool-making). Females, burdened by their reproductive roles—pregnancy, giving birth, lactation, and child care—supposedly became dependent on males for food and protection. The gender gap widened over time. As males initiated, explored, invented, women stayed at home, nurtured, immersed themselves in domestic life. The result: men are

active, women are passive; men are leaders, women are followers; men are dominant, women are subordinate.

Many of us have heard versions of this story. Mukhopadhyay interviewed men in Los Angeles (1970s) who invoked "our hunting past" to explain why they—and men generally—operated barbeques rather than their wives. Her women informants, all hospital nurses, doubted their navigational abilities, courage, and strength despite working in intensive care and regularly lifting heavy male patients. Both questioned whether women had the "stamina" or "toughness" for political leadership and whether the menstrual cycle and "emotional instability" during ovulation would be a problem. Scholars at the time offered similar explanations for why women "couldn't" hunt.

Man-the-Hunter heritage stories are invoked today for everything from some men's love of hunting to why men dominate technical fields, accumulate tools, have extra-marital affairs or commit the vast majority of homicides. Strength and toughness remain defining characteristics of masculinity in the United States, and these themes often permeate national political debates.[50] One element in the complex debate over gun control is the male-masculine strength-through-guns and man-the-hunter association, and it is still difficult for some males in the United States to feel comfortable with their soft, nurturant, emotional, and artistic sides.[51]During Covid 19, refusing to wear a mask sometimes became both a political statement and a sign of masculinity ("real men don't wear masks").

Man-the-hunter origin stories strikingly resemble 1950s U.S. models of family and gender, and the late nineteenth century "cult of domesticity" and "true womanhood." Father is "head" of the family and the final authority, whether in household decisions or in disciplining children. As "provider," Father goes "outside" into the cold, cruel world, hunting for work. Mother, as chief mom, remains at the home base, creating a domestic refuge from this hostile external "jungle." American anthropologists seemed to have subconsciously projected their own folk models onto our early human ancestors.

Altering this supposedly fundamental gender system, according to widely read authors in the 1970s, would go against our basic human nature. This applied to the political arena, then a virtually all-male domain. The 1971 quote below is particularly relevant to the 2016 USA presidential election, the first time a major U.S. political party selected a woman as its candidate (See Text Box 3, Gender and the Presidential Election).

> To make women equal participants in the political process, we will have to change the very process itself, which means changing a pattern bred into our behavior over the millennia. —Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox[52]

Replacing Stories with Reality

Decades of research, much of it by a new generation of women scholars, challenge these depictions of our evolutionary past.[53] For example, most primates, including our closest primate relatives, gorillas, chimpanzees, and bonobos, do not live in male-dominated groups. Old 1960s research on savannah, ground-dwelling baboons had claimed a stable male-dominance hierarchy was the "core" of the group, that it was established through force, regulated male sexual access to females, and defended the "troop" against a supposedly hostile savannah environment.[54] Females lacked hierarchies or coalitions, were passive, and were part of dominant male "harems."

Figure 14: Baboon male and female in voluntary relationship. Tanzania. Mukhopadhyay photo.

Critics first argued that baboons, as monkeys rather than apes, were too removed from humans evolutionarily to tell us much about early human social organization. Subsequent research on baboons in other environments, by primatologists such as Thelma Rowell, discovered they were neither male-focused nor male-dominated. Instead, the stable group core was **matrifocal**—a mother and her offspring constituted the central and enduring ties. Nor did males control female sexuality. Quite the contrary. Females mated freely and frequently, choosing males of all ages, sometimes establishing special relationships— "friends with favors." (See Figure 14). Dominance, while infrequent, was not based simply on size or strength; it was learned, situational, and often stress-induced. And like other primates, both male and female baboons used sophisticated strategies, dubbed "primate politics," to predict and manipulate the intricate social networks in which they lived.[55]

Rowell also restudied the savannah baboons. Even they did not fit the baboon stereotype. She found loosely structured groups with no specialized stable male-leadership coalitions. Instead, they were sociable, **matrifocal**, and infant-centered much like the Rhesus monkey mothers in Figure 15 and the Baboon fathers in Figure 16. Females actively initiated sexual encounters with a variety of male partners. When attacked by predators or frightened by some other major threat, males, rather than "defending the troop," typically would flee, running away first and leaving the females carrying infants to follow behind.[56]

Figure 15: Rhesus monkeys at the Periyar Reserve in Kerala, India. Mukhopadhyay photo.

Man the Hunter, the Meat-Eater?

The second, more important challenge was to key assumptions about the hunting way of life. Archaeological and paleontological fossil evidence and ethnographic data from contemporary foragers revealed that hunting and meat were not the primary subsistence mode. Instead, gathered foods such as plants, nuts, fruits, roots and small fish found in rivers and ponds were the dietary core and stable food source in all but a few settings (northerly climates, herd migration routes, and specific geographical and historical settings). When meat was important, it was more often scavenged or caught than hunted.

A major symposium on human evolution concluded that "opportunistic" scavenging was the

Figure 16: Baboon group with infants being carried by male. Tanzania. Mukhopadhyay photo

best description of early human hunting. Tools in pre-modern human sites were more appropriate for smashing scavenged bones than for hunting live animals.[57] Hunting, when carried out, was not in large-scale, all-male, planned, cooperative expeditions. Instead, it probably resembled the practices of contemporary foragers. Among the Hadza of Tanzania, hunting was done by a single male, or perhaps two, for a couple of hours, often without success. Collective hunting, among the Mbuti in the Central African rainforest, was traditionally by groups of families, with both women and men driving animals into nets. Among the Agta of the Philippines, women rather than men hunted collectively using dogs to herd animals to a place where they can be killed.[58] And !Kung San men, despite what was shown in the 1957 film *The Hunters*, did not normally hunt giraffe; they usually pursued small animals such as hares, rats, and gophers.

Discrediting the Hunting Hypothesis

Once the "hunting-meat" hypothesis was discredited, other parts of the theory began to unravel, especially the link between male dominance and female economic dependency. We now know that for most of human history—99 percent of it prior to the invention of agriculture some 10,000 or so years ago—women have "worked," often providing the stable sources of food for their family. Richard Lee, Marjorie Shostak, and others document with caloric counts and time-work estimates, the significance of women's gathering even in societies such as the !Kung San, in which hunting occurs regularly.[59] In foraging societies that rely primarily on fish, women also play a major role, "collecting" fish from rivers, lakes, and ponds. The exceptions are atypical environments such as the Arctic.

Figure 17: Collecting firewood in Bansankusu, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Of course, meat-getting is a narrow definition of food getting or subsistence work. Food processing activities are time-consuming. Collecting water and firewood is crucial, heavy work often done by women (Figure 17). Making and maintaining clothing, housing, and tools takes time. Early humans, both male and female, invented an array of items for carrying things (babies, wood, water), dug tubers, processed nuts, and cooked food. The invention of string some 24,000 years ago, a discovery so essential that it produced what some have called the "String Revolution," is attributed to women.[60] There is the "work of kinship," of healing, rituals, of teaching the next generation, and emotional work. All are part of the work of living and of the invisible work that women do.

Nor is it just hunting that requires intelligence, planning, cooperation, and detailed knowledge. Foragers have lived in a variety of environments across the globe, some more challenging than others (such as Alaska). Both males and females developed detailed knowledge of local flora and fauna and strategies for using these resources. Human social interactions also require sophisticated mental and communication skills. In short, humans' complex brains and other modern traits developed as adaptations to complex social life, a lengthy period of child-dependency that required cooperative nurturing, and the myriad of work even the simplest human societies must perform.

Refuting Pregnancy and Motherhood as Debilitating

Finally, cross-cultural data refutes another central man-the-hunter stereotype: the "burden" of pregnancy and child care. Women's reproductive roles do not generally prevent them from food-getting, including hunting; among the Agta, women hunt when pregnant. Foraging societies women accommodate the work-reproduction "conflict" by spacing out their pregnancies using methods such as prolonged breast feeding, long post-pregnancy periods of sexual inactivity, and native herbs and medicinal plants. Child care, even for infants, is rarely the sole responsibility of the birth mother. Instead, multiple caretakers are the norm: spouses, children, other relatives, and neighbors.[61] Reciprocity is the key to human social life and to survival in small-scale societies, and reciprocal child care is but one example of such reciprocity. Children and infants accompany their mothers (or fathers) on gathering trips, as among the !Kung San, and on Aka collective net-hunting expeditions. Agta women carry nursing infants with them when gathering-hunting, leaving older children at home in the care of spouses or other relatives.[62]

In pre-industrial horticultural and agricultural societies, having children and working are not incompatible—quite the opposite! Anthropologists long ago identified societies, especially in parts of Africa and Southeast Asia, in which farming is predominantly a woman's job and men "help out" as needed.[63]

In most agricultural societies, women who do not come from high-status or wealthy families perform a significant amount of agricultural labor, though it often goes unrecognized. Wet-rice agriculture, common in south and southeast Asia, is labor-intensive, particularly weeding and transplanting rice seedlings, often done by women (Figure 10). Harvesting rice, wheat, and other grains entails significant

female input. Yet the Census in many countries, like India, traditionally records only male family members as "farmers." In the United States, too, women's work on family-owned farms is often invisible.[64]

Women may accommodate their reproductive and child-rearing roles by engaging in work that is more compatible with child care, such as cooking, and in activities that occur closer to home and are interruptible and perhaps less dangerous, though cooking fires, stoves, and implements such as knives certainly can cause harm![65] More often, women adjust their work to the demands of pregnancy, breastfeeding, and other child care activities. They gather or process nuts while children nap; or take them to the fields while they weed or harvest or, these days, to urban construction sites where women (e.g. India) often do the heaviest (and lowest-paid) work.

In the United States, despite a long-standing cultural model of the stay-at-home mom, some mothers have always worked outside the home, mainly out of economic necessity. This shifting group includes single, divorced, and widowed mothers; immigrants; African-Americans (pre- and post-slavery); and U.S.-born Euro-Americans with limited financial resources. But workplace policies (except during World War II) have historically made it difficult for women (and men) to carry out family responsibilities, even requiring married and pregnant women to quit their jobs. Not much has changed. While pregnant women in the United States are no longer automatically dismissed from jobs—at least not legally—the United States lags far behind most European countries in providing affordable child care and paid parental leave.

Covid-19 exacerbated childcare problems, reducing existing sources of childcare while adding managing remote learning as schools and daycare centers closed their doors. This impacted women more than men, married or not, increasing their workload at home, causing many to quit, scale back, or lose their jobs. Employed women also suffered disproportionately because of their over-representation in the health care and service sectors.[66] The stress and increased workload experienced by health care workers during Covid-19 has been well-documented. Conversely, low-paid service sector workers suffered enormous job losses, especially women. In the U.S., women during 2020 ended the year with 5.4 million fewer jobs than before the pandemic; men with 4.4 million fewer jobs. In December 2020, women accounted for one hundred percent of the 140,000 jobs the U.S. lost that month.

Family and Marriage: A Cultural Construct and a Social Invention

Unraveling the hunting-way-of-life scenario, especially female dependence on males, undermines the naturalness of the U.S. nuclear family with its male-provider-protector and female-domestic-child-care division of labor. More than one hundred years of cross-cultural research reveals the varied forms humans invented for "partnering"—living in households, raising children, establishing long-term relationships, transmitting valuables to offspring, and other behaviors associated with family. Once again, the universality and evolutionary origins of the American family is more fiction than fact, a projection of our cultural model of family and gender on the past and the entire human species.

Family: Biology and Culture

What **is** natural about the family? Like gender and sexuality, there is a biological component. There is a biological mother and a biological father, although the mother plays a significantly larger and longer role from the time of conception to the end of infant dependency. In the past, conception normally required sexual intercourse but that is no longer the case thanks to sperm banks and in vitro fertilization. There is also a biological relationship between parents and offspring—again, more obvious in the case of the mother since the baby develops in and emerges from her body. Nevertheless, DNA and genes are real and influence the traits and potentialities of the next generation.

Beyond those biological realities, culture and society seem to take over, building on—or ignoring—biology. We all know there are biological fathers unaware of or not concerned about their biological offspring and not involved in their care and biological mothers who, after giving birth, give up their children through adoption or to other family members. In recent decades, technology has allowed women to act as "surrogate mothers," using their bodies as carriers for implanted fertilized eggs of couples who wish to have a child. On the other hand, we all probably know of excellent parents who are not the biological mothers and fathers, but acquire legal parenthood through adoption.

When we think of good (or bad) parents, or a really "good mother," "wonderful father," or two "terrific mothers," we are not talking biology. We are thinking of a set of cultural and behavioral expectations and being an adoptive rather than biological parent isn't really the issue. Clearly, parenthood, mother-father. and other kinship relationships (with siblings, grandparents, and uncles-aunts) go beyond biology and are social roles, legal relationships, meanings and expectations constructed by human cultures in specific social and historical contexts. This is not to deny the importance of kinship; it is fundamental, especially in small-scale pre-industrial societies. But kinship is as much about culture as it is about biology. Biology, in a sense, is only the beginning—and may not be necessary.

Marriage also is not "natural." It is a cultural invention that involves various meanings and functions in different cultural contexts. We know it is not necessary to be married to have sex or to have children. Indeed, in the United States, a growing number of women who give birth are not married, and the percentage of unmarried women giving birth is higher in many northwestern European countries.[67] Cross-culturally, marriage seems to be primarily about **societal regulation of relationships**—a social contract between two individuals and, often, their families, that specifies rights and obligations of married individuals and of the offspring that married women produce. Some anthropologists have argued that marriage IS primarily about children and "descent"—who will "own" children.[68] To whom will they belong? With what rights, obligations, social statuses, access to resources, group identities, and all the other assets—and liabilities—that exist within a society? Children have historically been essential for family survival—for literal reproduction and for social reproduction.

Think, for a moment, about our taken-for-granted assumptions about to whom children belong.[69] Clearly, children emerge from a woman's body and, indeed, after approximately nine months, it is her body that has nurtured and "grown" this child. But who "owns" that child legally—to whom it belongs and the beliefs associated with how it was conceived and who played a role in its conception—is not a biological given. Not in human societies. One fascinating puzzle in human evolution is how females lost control over their sexuality and their offspring! Why do so many, though not all, cultural theories of procreation consider women's role as minor, if not irrelevant—not as the "seed," for example, but merely as a "carrier" of the male seed she will eventually "deliver" to its "owner"? Thus, having a child biologically is not equivalent to social ownership. Marriage, cross-culturally, deals with social ownership of offspring. What conditions must be met? What exchanges must occur, particularly between families or kinship groups, for that offspring to be theirs, his, hers—for it to be a legitimate heir?

Marriage then, is a contract, usually between families, even if unwritten. Throughout most of human history, kinship groups and, later, religious institutions have regulated marriage. Most major religions today have formal laws and marriage contracts, even in societies with civil marriage codes. Some countries, like India, have separate marriage codes for each major religion along with a secular, civil marriage code. Who children "belong to" is rarely solely about biology; it is about biology shaped by society and culture. The notion of an "illegitimate" child in the United States is not about biology but about "legitimacy," that is, whether the child was the result of a legally recognized relationship that entitled offspring to certain rights, including inheritance.

From this perspective, what we think of as a normal or natural family in the United States is actually

a culturally and historically specific, legally codified set of relationships between two individuals and, to some extent, their families. Cross-culturally, the U.S. (and "traditional" British-Euro-American) nuclear family is quite unusual. Married couples in the United States normally establish a separate, nuclear-family-based household, rather than living with one spouse's parents and forming a larger multi-generational household, an "extended" family. In addition, U.S. marriages are monogamous—legally, one may have only one husband or wife at a time. But a majority of societies studied by anthropologists have allowed polygamy (multiple spouses). Polygyny (one husband, multiple wives) is most common but polyandry (one wife, multiple husbands) also occurs; occasionally marriages involve multiple husbands and multiple wives. Spouses, particularly wives, often have their own dwelling space, commonly shared with their children, but in one compound, with their husbands' parents and his relatives. Across cultures, then, most households tend to be extended-family-based groups.

These two contrasts alone lead to families in the United States that are smaller and focused more on the husband-wife (or spousal) and parent-child relationships; other relatives are more distant, literally and conceptually. US families depend on a smaller set of relationships to fulfill family responsibilities for work, child care, finances, emotional companionship, and even sexual obligations. Other things being equal, the death or loss of a spouse in a traditional U.S. family has a bigger impact than such a loss in an extended family (see Text Box 1, What Can We Learn from the Na?). On the other hand, nuclear families own and control their incomes and other assets, unlike extended families which hold them jointly. This can give couples and individual spouses in nuclear families greater freedom.

There are other cross-cultural variations in family, marriage and kinship: in expectations for spouses and children, inheritance rules, marriage rituals, ideal ages and characteristics of spouses, conditions for dissolving a marriage and remarriage after a spouse's death, attitudes about premarital, extra-marital, and marital sexuality, and so forth. How "descent" is calculated is a social-cultural process that carves out, from all relatives, a smaller group in which individuals will have rights (e.g., to property, assistance, political representation) and obligations (economic, social). Often there are explicit norms about who one should and should not marry, including which relatives. Marriage between people we call cousins is common cross-culturally. These variations in the definition of marriage and family reflect what human cultures do with the biological "facts of life," creating diverse marriage, family, and kinship systems.

Romantic Love, Sex and Marriage

Another major contrast between the U.S. and many other cultures is that our husband-wife relationship is based on free choice and "romantic love." Marriages are arranged by the couple and reflect their desires rather than the desires of larger societal groups. Of course, even in the United States, that has never been entirely the case. Informal prohibitions, often imposed by families, have shaped (and continue to shape) individual choices, such as marrying outside one's religion, racial/ethnic group, and socio-economic class or within one's gender. Some religions explicitly forbid marrying someone from another religion. But U.S. formal government prohibitions have also existed, such as laws against inter-racial marriage, which were only declared unconstitutional in 1967 (*Loving v. Virginia*).

These so-called anti-miscegenation laws, directed mainly at European-American and African-Americans, were designed to preserve the race-based system of social stratification in the United States.[70] They did not affect both genders equally but reflected the intersection of gender with class and racial inequality. During slavery, most inter-racial sexual activity was initiated by Euro-American males. It was not uncommon for male slave owners to have illicit, often forced sexual relations with female slaves. The laws were created so that children of slave women inherited their mother's racial and slave status, thereby also adding to the slave property of the "father."

Euro-American women's relationships with African-American men, though far less frequent and usually voluntary, posed special problems. Offspring would inherit the mother's "free" status and increase the free African-American population or possibly end up "passing" as "White." Social and legal weapons were used to prevent such relationships. Euro-American women, especially poorer women, who were involved sexually with African-American men were stereotyped as prostitutes, sexually depraved, and outcasts. Laws were passed that fined them for such behavior or required them to work as indentured servants for the child's father's slave owner; other laws prohibited cohabitation between a "White" and someone of African descent.

Post-slavery anti-miscegenation laws tried to preserve the "color line" biologically by outlawing mating and to maintain the legal "purity" and status of Euro-American lineages by outlawing inter-racial marriage. In reality, inter-racial mating continued, but inter-racial offspring did not have the rights of "legitimate" children. By the 1920s, some states, like Virginia, had outlawed "Whites" from marrying anyone who had a "single drop" of African blood. By 1924, 38 states outlawed Black-White marriages, and as late as the 1950s, inter-racial marriage bans existed in almost half of the states and had been extended to Native Americans, Mexicans, "East Indians," Malays, and other groups designated "not White."[71]

Overall, stratified inegalitarian societies tend to have the strictest controls over marriage. Such control is common when some groups are considered inherently superior to others, be it racially, castes, or "royal" blood. Patriarchal societies closely regulate and restrict premarital sexual contacts of women, especially higher-status women. One function of marriage in these societies is to reproduce the existing social structure, partially by ensuring that marriages and any resulting offspring will maintain and potentially increase the families social standing. Elite, dominant groups have the most to lose in terms of status and wealth, including inheritances. "Royalty" in Britain, for example, traditionally are not supposed to marry "commoners" so as to ensure that the royal "blood," titles, and other privileges remain in the royal family.

Cross-culturally, even in relatively egalitarian small-scale societies such as the San and the Trobriand Islanders, marriage is rarely a purely individual choice left to the wishes—and whims of, or "electricity" between—the two spouses.[72] This is not to say that spouses never have input or prior contact; they may know each other and even have grown up together. In most societies, however, a marriage has profound social consequences and is far too important to be "simply" an individual choice. Since marriages affect families and kin economically, socially, and politically, family members (especially elders) play a major role in arranging marriages along lines consistent with their own goals and using their own criteria. Families sometimes arrange their children's marriages when the children are quite young. In Nuosu communities of southwest China, some families held formal engagement ceremonies for babies to, ideally, cement a good cross-cousin partnership, though no marital relationship would occur until much later.[73] There also can be conventional categories of relatives who are supposed to marry each other so young girls might know that their future husbands will be particular cousins, and the girls might play or interact with them at family functions as children.[74]

This does not mean romantic love is a recent or purely U.S. and European phenomenon. Romantic love is widespread even in cultures that have strong views on arranging marriages. Traditional cultures in India, both Hindu and Muslim, are filled with love stories expressed in songs, paintings, and famous temple sculptures. One of the most beautiful buildings in the world, the Taj Mahal, is a monument to Shah Jahan's love for his favorite wife. Where young girls' marriages are arranged, often to older men (as among the Maasai), those girls, once married, sometimes take lovers about whom they sing "love songs" and with whom they engage in sexual relations.[75] Truly, romantic love, sex, and marriage can exist independently.

Nevertheless, cross-culturally and historically, marriages based on free choice and romantic love are relatively unusual and recent. Clearly, young people all over the world are attracted to the idea, which is romanticized in Bollywood films, music, poetry, and other forms of contemporary popular culture. No wonder so many families—and conservative social and religious groups—are concerned, if not terrified, of losing control over young people's mating and marriage behavior (see, for example, the excellent PBS documentary *The World before Her*).[76] A social revolution is truly underway and we haven't even gotten to same-sex relationships.

Text Box 1: What Can We Learn from the Na? Shattering Ideas about Family and Relationships
By Tami Blumenfield

We have certain expectations about the trajectories of relationships and family life in the United States—young people meet, fall in love, purchase a diamond, and then marry. To some extent, this specific view of family is changing as same-sex relationships and no-longer-new reproductive technologies expand our views of what family can and cannot be. Still, quite often, we think about family in a rigid, heteronormative context, assuming that everyone wants the same thing. What if we think about family in an entirely different way? In fact, many people already do. In 2014, ten percent of American adults lived in cohabiting relationships. Meanwhile, fifty-one percent were married in state-endorsed relationships, and that percentage has been dropping fast.[77] Those numbers may sound familiar as part of politicians' "focus on the family," decrying the number of children born to unmarried parents and bemoaning the weakening of an institution they hold dear (even though their colleagues are frequently exposed in the news for sexual indiscretions).It is true that adults with limited resources face challenges raising children when they have limited access to affordable, high-quality child care. They struggle when living wage jobs migrate to other countries or other states where workers earn less. In an economic system that encourages concentration of resources in a tiny fraction of the population, it is no wonder that they struggle. But is the institution of marriage really to blame? The number of cohabiting unmarried individuals is high in many parts of Europe as well, but with better support structures in place, parents fare much better. They enjoy parental leave policies that mandate their jobs be held for them upon return from leave. They also benefit from strong educational systems and state-subsidized child care, and their children enjoy better outcomes than ours. Critics see the "focus on the family" by U.S. politicians as a convenient political trick that turns attention away from crucial policy issues and refocuses it on the plight of the institution of marriage and the fate of the nation's children. Few people can easily dismiss these concerns, even if they do not reflect their own lived realities. And besides, the family model trumpeted by politicians as lost is but one form of family that is not universal even in the United States, much less among all human groups, as sociologist Stephanie Coontz convincingly argued in books including *The Way We Never Were* (1992) and *The Way We Really Are* (1997).

In fact, the "focus on family" ignores the diverse ways peoples on this continent have organized their relationships. For Hopi, a Native American group living in what is today the southwestern United States, for example, it is their mother's kin rather than their husbands' from whom they draw support. The Navajo, Kiowa, and Iroquois Native American cultures all organize their family units and arrange their relationships differently.

Na people living in the foothills of the Himalayas have many ways to structure family relationships, as a 2019 segment on NBC's The Today Show, "Exploring the Kingdom of Women in China," illustrated. One relationship structure looks like what we might expect in a place where people make their living from the land and raise livestock to sustain themselves. Young adults marry, and brides sometimes move into the husband's childhood home and live with his parents. They have children, who live with them, and they work together. A second Na family structure looks much less familiar: young adults live in large, extended family households with several generations and form romantic relationships with someone from another household. When they are ready, the young man seeks permission to spend the night in the young woman's room. If both parties desire, their relationship can evolve into a long-term one, but they do not marry and do not live together in the same household. When a child is conceived, or before if the couple chooses, their relationship moves from a secretive one to one about which others know. Even so, the young man rarely spends daylight hours with his partner. Instead, he returns to his own family's home to help with farming and other work there. The state is not involved in their relationship, and their money is not pooled either, though presents change hands. If either partner becomes disenchanted with the other, the relationship need not persist. Their children remain in the mother's home, nurtured by adults who love them deeply—not just by their mothers but also by their grandmothers, maternal aunts, maternal uncles, and often older cousins as well. They enjoy everyday life with an extended family (Figure 18). The third Na family structure mixes the preceding two systems.

Someone joins a larger household as a spouse. Perhaps the family lacked enough women or men to manage the household and farming tasks adequately or the couple faced pressure from the government to marry.

Figure 18: Na grandmother with her maternal grandchildren. They live in the same household, along with the grandmother's adult sons and her daughter, the children's mother. Photograph by Tami Blumenfield, 2002.

As an anthropologist who has done fieldwork in Na communities since 2001, I can attest to the loving and nurturing families their system encourages. It protects adults as well as children. Women who are suffering in a relationship can end it with limited consequences for their children, who do not need to relocate to a new house and adjust to a new lifestyle. Lawyers need not get involved, as they often must in divorce cases elsewhere in the world. A man who cannot afford to build a new house for his family—a significant pressure in many areas of China that prevents young men from marrying or delays their marriages—can still enjoy a relationship or can choose, instead, to devote himself to his role as an uncle. Women and men who do not feel the urge to pursue romantic lives are protected in this system as well; they can contribute to their natal families without having to worry that no one will look out for them as they age.

Like any system composed of real people, Na systems are not perfect, and neither are the people who visit them. In the last few decades, people have flocked to Lugu Lake hoping to catch a glimpse of this unusual society, and many tourists and tour guides have mistakenly taken Na flexibility in relationships as signifying a land of casual sex with no recognition of paternity. These are highly problematic assumptions that offend my Na acquaintances deeply. Na people have fathers and know who they are, and they often enjoy close relationships despite living apart. In fact, fathers are deeply involved in children's lives and often participate in everyday child-rearing activities. Of course, as in other parts of the world, some fathers participate more than others. Fathers and their birth families also take responsibility for contributing to school expenses and make other financial contributions as circumstances permit. Clearly, this is not a community in which men do not fulfill responsibilities as fathers. It is one in which the responsibilities and how they are fulfilled varies markedly from those of fathers living in other places and cultures.

Though problems exist in Na communities and their relationship patterns are already changing and transforming them, it is encouraging that so many people can live satisfied lives in this flexible system. The Na shatter our expectations about how families and relationships should be organized. They also inspire us to ask whether we can, and should, adapt part of their ethos into our own society.[78]

For more information, see the TEDx FurmanU presentation by Tami Blumenfiel

Male Dominance: Universal and Biologically Rooted?

Unraveling the myth of the hunting way of life and women's dependence on male hunting undermined the logic behind the evolutionary argument for biologically rooted male dominance. Still, for feminist scholars, the question of male dominance remained important. Was it universal, "natural," inevitable, and unalterable? Were some societies gender-egalitarian? Was gender inequality a cultural phenomenon, a product of culturally and historically specific conditions? And therefore changeable?

Research in the 1970s and 1980s addressed these questions.[79] Some argued that gender inequality was universal and resulted from complex cultural processes related to women's reproductive roles.[80] Others presented evidence of gender equality in small-scale societies (such as the !Kung San and Native American Iroquois) but argued it disappeared with the rise of private property and "the state."[81] Still others focused on evaluating women's position cross-culturally, trying to identify the most significant factors affecting women's status (e.g., economics, social forms, cultural beliefs).[82] By the late 1980s, scholars realized how difficult it was to define, much less measure, male dominance even in one culture.

Think of our own society. How would you go about assessing the "status of women"? What indicators would you use? What information would you gather and from whom? What difficulties might you encounter? Could men and women have different views? People from different communities and backgrounds? Then imagine comparing the status of women here to let's say, Chile or China or to a kin-based, small society like the Minangkabau in Indonesia or the !Kung San in Botswana. What would you need to know about their culture? Whose perspective would you use? Theirs? Yours? Next, how might Martians, arriving in your city, decide whether you live in a "male dominated" culture? What would they notice? What might be difficult to decipher? What misinterpretations could arise? This experiment gives you an idea of what anthropologists confronted—except they tried to include all societies that ever existed. Many were accessible only through archaeological evidence or through historical records, often made by travelers, sailors, or missionaries. Surviving small-scale cultures were surrounded by more powerful societies that often attempted to impose their cultures and gender ideologies on those under their control.

For example, the !Kung San of Southern Africa, when studied by anthropologists, had already been pushed by European colonial rulers into marginal areas. Most were living on "reserves" similar to Indian reservations in the United States. Others lived in market towns and were sometimes involved in the tourist industry and in films such as the ethnographically flawed and ethnocentric film *The Gods Must Be Crazy* (1980). !Kung San women were learning European Christian ideas about sexuality, clothing, and covering their breasts, and children were attending missionary-established schools, which taught European and Church views of gender roles along with the Bible, Jesus, and the Virgin Mary. During the struggle against apartheid in Southern Africa, the South African military tried to recruit San to fight against the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), taunting reluctant !Kung San men by calling them "chicken" and assuming, erroneously, that the !Kung San shared their warrior version of masculinity.[83]

Given the complexity of evaluating "universal male dominance," scholars abandoned the search for simple answers, for key determinants of women's status that would apply to all societies. A 1988 *Annual Review of Anthropology* article by Mukhopadhyay and Higgins concluded that "the original questions, still unanswerable, may be both naïve and inappropriate."[84] The concept of status, itself, is complex and contains multiple components (e.g. economics, power/authority, prestige, autonomy). High status in one area, such as prestige, might not indicate high status in another, such as economics/wealth. And high status may be in only one sphere of life. The presence of powerful female religious deities does not necessarily mean females have power/authority in the domestic or political sphere. Within a single

culture, kinship role, age, class, race/ethnicity and other socio-economic variables all also affect one's gender status.

Amassing Data, Finding Patterns in Gender Systems

Scholars in the 1990s began to focus on improving the ethnographic and archaeological record and on re-examining old material through a gender-sensitive lens. The past virtual invisibility of women in archaeology disappeared as new studies were published. Everything from divisions of labor to power relations to sexuality could be scrutinized in the archaeological record.[85]

Many American anthropologists "returned home," looking with fresh eyes at the diversity of women's lives in their own society: working-class, immigrants, non-Euros, different geographic regions and occupations.[86] Sexuality studies made visible the lives of lesbian mothers and other traditionally marginalized sexualities and identities.[87] Some ethnographers immersed themselves in the abortion debates, conducting fieldwork to understand the perspective of activists. Others headed to college campuses, studying the "culture of romance" or fraternity gang rape.[88]

Armed with new and better data, anthropologists began to identify patterns occurring across multiple societies. Some explored a single topic, such as concepts of menstrual blood, masculinity or fertility/infertility.[89] Peggy Sanday focused on sexual coercion, discovering a configuration of traits associated with "rape-prone" societies: violence, sexual separation and antagonism, and male dominance.[90] Others explored the gendered impact of particular configurations of kinship and family relations, such as the **patrifocal** (male-focused) cultural model of family found in many parts of India.[91]

Scholars noted the importance women's economic contributions have on their power, prestige, and autonomy.[92] But work is only one component of economic power; it may not be valued, does not necessarily lead to control or ownership of what one produces, nor other forms of wealth or political power. Women in many places engage in agricultural labor, but the fields are owned and controlled by their husbands' families or by a landlord. The women have little authority, prestige, or autonomy.[93] On the other hand, many foraging and some horticultural societies recognize women's economic (and reproductive) contributions, which may lead to relative equality and autonomy in other spheres, such as sexuality. Gender relations seem more egalitarian, overall, in small-scale societies such as the San, Trobrianders, and Na, in part because they are kinship-based, with relatively few valuable resources that can be accumulated; those that exist are communally owned, usually by kinship groups in which both women and men have rights.

Another factor in gender equality is the social environment. Positive social relations—an absence of constant hostility or warfare with neighbors—seems to be correlated with relatively egalitarian gender relations. In contrast, militarized societies—whether small-scale horticultural groups who perceive their neighbors as potential enemies, or large-scale stratified societies with formal military organizations and vast empires—seem to benefit men more than women overall.[94] Warrior societies culturally value men's roles, and warfare gives men access to economic and political resources.

As to old stereotypes about why men are warriors, there may be another explanation. From a reproductive standpoint, men are far more expendable than women, especially women of reproductive age.[95] While this theme has not yet been taken up by many anthropologists, male roles in warfare could be more about expendability than supposed greater male strength, aggressiveness, or courage. One can ask why it took so long for women in the United States to be allowed to fly combat missions. Certainly it was not that women weren't strong enough to carry the plane.[96]

Patriarchy . . . But What about Matriarchy?

The rise of stratified agriculture-intensive centralized societies transformed gender relations and gender ideologies to produce what some call **patriarchy**, a male-dominated political and authority structure and an ideology that privileges males over females overall and in every strata of society. Gender intersects with class and, often, with religion, caste, and ethnicity. So, while there have been powerful queens, males took precedence over females within royal families; and while upper-class Brahmin women in India could have male servants, they had fewer formal assets, power, and rights than their brothers and husbands. Also, as noted earlier, families strictly controlled their movements, interactions with males, "social reputations," and marriages. Similarly, while twentieth-century British colonial women in British-controlled India had power over some Indian men, they still could not vote, hold high political office, or exercise other rights available to their male counterparts.[97] Of course, poor lower-class lower-caste Indian women were (and still are) the most vulnerable and mistreated in India, more so overall than their brothers, husbands, fathers, or sons.

On the other hand, we have yet to find any "matriarchies," that is, female-dominated societies where the range of women's power, authority, and privilege parallels men's in patriarchal societies. Some people at first confused matriarchy with **matrilineal**. In matrilineal societies, descent or membership in a kinship group is transmitted from mothers to their children (male and female) and then, through daughters, to their children, and so forth (as in many Na families). Matrilineal societies create woman-centered kinship groups in which having daughters is often more important to "continuing the line" than having sons, and living arrangements after marriage often center around related women in a **matrilocal** extended family household. Female sexuality may become less regulated since it is the mother who carries the "seed" of the lineage. In this sense, it is the reverse of the patrilineal, patrilocal, patrifocal male-oriented kinship groups and households one finds in many patriarchal societies. Peggy Reeves Sanday suggested, on these and other grounds, that the Minangkabau, a major ethnic group in Indonesia, is a matriarchy—although other anthropologists disagree.[98]

Males, especially as members of matrilineages, can be powerful in matrilineal societies. They may have key roles in arranging marriages, allocating property, representing the kinship group on village councils. Warfare, as previously mentioned, along with political and social stratification can alter gender dynamics, giving males more authority, and in some cases, producing male-focused, patrifocal residential groups. History also matters. The Nayar (in Kerala, India), the Minangkabau, and the Na are matrilineal societies embedded in, or influenced by, dominant cultures and patriarchal religions such as Islam and Hinduism. Thus, the larger context, including contemporary global processes, can undermine women's power and status.[99] At the same time, many societies are clearly matrifocal, are relatively female-centered, and do not have the kinds of gender ideologies and systems found in most patriarchal societies.[100] Text Boxes 1 and 2 provide examples of such systems.

Text Box 2: Does Black Matriarchy Exist in Brazil? Histories of Slavery and African Cultural Survivals in Afro-Brazilian Religion
By Abby Gondek

Candomblé is an Afro-Brazilian spirit possession religion in which Yoruba (West African) deities called orixás are honored at religious sites called terreiros where Candomblé priestesses (mães do santo) and their "daughters" (filhas do santo) live. One central "hub" of Candomblé worship in Brazil is the northeastern state of Bahia, where Afro-Brazilians make up more than eighty percent of the population in the capital city, Salvador.

In the 1930s, anthropologist Ruth Landes provided a perspective about Bahia that emphasized women's communal

power. During this period, debate began among social scientists about whether Candomblé was a matriarchal religion in which women were the primary spiritual leaders. The debate was rooted in the question of where "Black matriarchy" came from. Was it a result of the history of slavery or was it an African "cultural survival"? The debate was simultaneously about the power and importance of Afro-Brazilian women in spiritual and cultural life.

E. Franklin Frazier, an African-American sociologist, maintained that Candomblé and the lack of legal marriage gave women their important position in Bahia. He believed Black women had been matriarchal authorities since the slavery period and described them as defiant and self-reliant.[101] On the other side of the debate was anthropologist Melville Herskovits, who believed that Black women's economic roles demonstrated African cultural survivals, but downplayed the priestesses' importance in Candomblé. Herskovits saw patriarchy rather than matriarchy as the central organizing principle in Bahia. He argued that African cultural survivals in Brazil came from the patrilineal practices of Dahomey and Yoruba in West Africa, and portrayed Bahian communities as male-centered, with wives and "concubines" catering to men and battling each other for male attention.[102]

Meanwhile, Ruth Landes, in *The City of Women* (1947), continued to argue that Afro-Brazilian women were the powerful matriarchal leaders of *terreiros* de Candomblé. She called them matriarchal because their leadership was "made up almost exclusively of women and, in any case controlled by women."[103]Landes claimed women provided spiritual advice and sexual relationships in exchange for financial support from male patrons of the *terreiros.* She said newer *caboclo* houses (which worshipped both indigenous and Yoruba spirits) had less-stringent guidelines and allowed men to become priests and dance for the gods, actions considered taboo in the Yoruba tradition. Landes described these men as primarily "passive" homosexuals, a "modern" development detracting from the supposedly "pure" woman-centered Yoruba (West African) practices.[104]Even Landes' (controversial) argument about homosexuality was part of her claim about matriarchy; she contended that the men who became *pais do santo* ("fathers of the saint," or Candomblé priests) had previously been "outcasts"—prostitutes and vagrants who were hounded by the police. By becoming like the "mothers" and acting as women, they could gain status and respect.

Landes was strongly influenced by the women priestesses of the traditional houses (*Gantois, Casa Branca*, and *Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá*) with whom she spent the majority of her time. Thus, her writings likely represent the perspectives of her primary informants, making her work unique for that time. Landes incorporated ideas from Frazier and Herskovits to contend that the existence of the matriarchy in Bahia rested on women's economic positions, sexuality, and capacities, which were influenced by (1) European slave owners' preference for Black women as heads of families, and the inculcation of leadership traits in Black women and not Black men; and (2) the history of women's roles as property owners, market sellers, priestesses, and warriors in West Africa.[105]Landes' findings continue to be critiqued in contemporary academic contexts because of her matriarchy thesis and her views about homosexual *pais* and *filhos do santo*. But Cheryl Sterling sees Landes' *The City of Women* as "still relevant today as the first feminist account of Candomblé" and maintains that Candomblé is a space in which Afro-Brazilian women are the "supreme authority," with the *terreiro* an enclave of "female power."[106]

Has Civilization "Advanced" Women's Position?

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers and social scientists, such as Herbert Spencer, often argued that women's positions "advanced" with "civilization", especially under European influence, at least relative to so-called "primitive" societies. The picture is complicated, but the opposite may be true. Anthropological studies suggest that civilization, colonialism, "development," and globalization have been mixed blessings for women[107] Their traditional workloads tend to increase while they are simultaneously excluded from new opportunities in agricultural cash crops, trading, and technology. Under colonial legal systems, they often lose traditional rights (e.g., to land, other valuables) within extended family kinship groups. They may experience increased pressure from men to be the upholders of cultural and religious traditions, whether through marriage practices, abiding by sexual segregation rules, or by wearing certain types of clothing, like headscarves or sarees. On the other hand, new political, economic, and educational opportunities can open up for women, allowing them not only to contribute to their families but to delay marriage, pursue alternatives to marriage, and, if they marry, to have a more powerful voice in their marriages.[108]

Deeply embedded cultural-origin stories are extremely powerful, difficult to unravel, and can persist despite contradictory evidence, in part because of their familiarity. They resemble what people have seen and experienced throughout their lifetimes, even in the twenty-first century, despite all the

changes. Nineteenth and twentieth century cultural models are also continuously reinforced and reproduced in every generation through powerful devices: children's stories and animated films; rituals like Valentine's Day; fashion, advertisements, music, video games, and popular culture generally; and by educational, financial, political, legal, and military institutions and their leaders.

But profound transformations can produce a backlash, as movements in the United States (and elsewhere) seek to restore "traditional" family forms, "traditional" male and female roles, sexual abstinence-virginity (especially for women), and the "sanctity" of heterosexual marriage.[109]Backlash elements were at work in the U.S. 2016 Presidential and Congressional elections (see Text Box 3, Gender and the U.S. Presidential Election). Cultural origin stories also persist because they are **legitimizing ideologies**—complex belief systems that can be used to rationalize, explain, and perpetuate systems of inequality. The hunting-way-of-life theory of human evolution, for example, both naturalizes and essentializes male dominance and other gender-related traits and provides an origin story and a legitimizing ideology for the traditional U.S. nuclear family as "fundamental to human social organization and life." It can be used to justify spousal rape and domestic violence, treating both as private family matters and, in the past, as male marital rights. Not surprisingly, elements of the traditional nuclear family model appear in the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court case that legalized same-sex marriage, especially in the dissenting views.

Recent successful efforts to roll back U.S. women's reproductive rights are another example of this backlash. In the 2016 Presidential election, many evangelical Christians (among others) supported Donald Trump because he promised to appoint judges who opposed the constitutional right to abortion established in *Roe v. Wade* (1973). On June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court, in a five-four decision, aided by three Trump-appointed justices, ruled that the Constitution does not confer a right to abortion. Their ruling stated that the authority to regulate abortion is "returned to the people and their elected representatives" (*Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*).[110]The immediate result was a flood of legislation at the state level, some protecting abortion rights, much of it restricting abortion access to varying degrees. The state of abortion rights in the United States is in flux, some would say chaotic, as governments, reproductive health organizations and providers, medical schools, legal experts, religious groups and, most of all, individuals, wrestle with the fallout from this historic decision. This fallout includes attempts to outlaw long-standing Federal Drug Administration-approved medication abortion drugs.[111]

Cultural models of gender and family have always been "hot button issues" in human societies. But in the 21st century, they are a central part of the "culture wars" in the United States, further polarizing an already polarized nation. Reproductive rights, specifically, play an increasingly significant role in U.S. politics and elections. Both sides are mobilizing. Deeply conservative Republican controlled state legislatures work to swiftly pass laws which prohibit virtually all abortions, criminalize abortion providers and clients, and even empower and reward citizens who "catch" those who violate the abortion laws (Texas). But there is pushback. Some organizations are raising Church-State separation issues, legally challenging the prioritizing of some religious views over others. Many people, including some Christian groups, view abortion access as a basic human right, regardless of their personal views. They believe in women's right to control their own bodies and reproductive decisions and strongly reject state interference in such private, intimate matters. Physicians and other health professionals are trying to correct biologically inaccurate or misleading information put forth by anti-abortion activists, including the capacity of the fetus to experience pain, brain development, and depictions of embryos as miniature but fully formed human babies.[112]

Backlashes are a response to transformations. And gender systems are deeply embedded in our cultural beliefs and social and religious institutions. So it is perhaps not surprising that we are currently experiencing such turmoil.

For a related activity, see Activity 3: Ethnographic Interview: How has Gender Changed Over Time? on the Teaching & Learning Resources section of the Perspectives website. For PDF file see: https://perspectives.americananthro.org/teaching/Gender-and-Sexuality-Learning-Resources.pdf

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Text Box 3: Gender and the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election
By Carol C. Mukhopadhyay

The 2016 presidential election was gender precedent-setting in ways that will take decades to analyze (see for example Gail Collins). For the first time, a major U.S. political party chose a woman as its presidential candidate. And while Hillary Rodham Clinton did not win the electoral college, she won the popular vote, the first woman to do so, and by nearly three million votes. As a cultural anthropologist who has long studied women and politics, I offer a few preliminary observations on the role of gender in the 2016 presidential election.[113]

Women on the Political Leadership Stage

From a positive perspective, for the first time, two women (Republican Carly Fiorina and Democrat Hillary Clinton) participated in televised presidential primary debates and one went on to the "finals." Millions of people, including children, saw articulate, accomplished, powerful women competing with men to be "Commander-in-Chief." During the 2016 Democratic National Convention, the country watched a major political party and key male leaders celebrate the life and professional and leadership-relevant achievements of a woman, its presidential nominee. The role-modeling impacts are enormous—and, one hopes, long lasting.

The Gendered White House Family

The 2016 presidential campaign challenged, at least momentarily, the traditional, taken-for-granted, gendered institution of the White House first "family." What if the president's spouse were male? This would wreck havoc with the conventional "first lady" role! Traditionally, the spouse, even if highly educated, becomes the "help mate" and "listener," handles "domestic affairs," organizes and attends important social occasions, and works on gender-appropriate projects such as children's health. Hillary Clinton was roundly criticized, as first lady, for venturing beyond the "domestic sphere" and pursuing health care reform in Bill Clinton's administration even though she had indisputably relevant professional expertise. Michelle Obama, with her Harvard law degree and prior career as a lawyer, became best known as "First Mom" and a "fashion-setter" whose clothing was discussed and emulated. While she was a very positive role model, especially for African-Americans, and developed major initiatives to combat childhood obesity and promote fresh food, she did not challenge *gender conventions*. How many girls remember her professional credentials and achievements?

Had Hillary Clinton won, the need to confront gendered elements of the conventional White House family would have come to the forefront as the "first gentleman" role gradually evolved. Certainly, no one would have expected Bill Clinton to choose dinnerware patterns, redecorate the living quarters, or become a fashion trend-setter.

Consensual Sexual Interactions: Which Century Are We In?

The 2016 presidential campaign stimulated discussion of other often-ignored gender-related topics. Despite some progress, sexual harassment and sexual assault, including rape, remain widespread in the workplace and on college campuses (cf. Stanford case, The Hunting Ground). Yet there has been enormous pressure on women—and institutions—to remain silent.

In October 2016, after a video was released of Donald Trump bragging about his ability to sexually grope women he did not know, the presidential candidate said it was only "locker room talk"…not anything he had ever done. Hearing these denials, several women, some well-known, came forth with convincing claims that Trump had groped them or in other ways engaged in inappropriate, non-consensual sexual behavior. Trump responded by denying the charges, insulting the accusers, and threatening lawsuits against the claimants and news media organizations that published the reports.[114] For many women, the video aroused memories of their own recurring experiences with sexual harassment and assault. After the video was released, Kelly Oxford started a tidal wave of women unburdening long-kept secrets with her tweet: "Women: tweet me your first assaults." Others went on record denouncing Trumps' talk and behavior, and the hashtag #NotOkay surged on Twitter.

In a normal U.S. presidential election, the video and repeated accusations of sexual assault would have forced the candidate to withdraw. Instead, accusers experienced a backlash not only from Trump but from some media organizations and Trump supporters, illustrating why women are reluctant to come forth or press sexual charges, especially against powerful men (see the 1991 Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas case). These voters' reactions and the continued willingness of so many to vote for the candidate suggest that "locker room banter" and unwanted sexual advances are still considered normal and acceptable among significant segments of our population. After all, "boys will be boys," at least in the old (false) baboon stereotype of male behavior! Clearly, we need more public conversations about what constitutes appropriate and consensual sexually related behavior.

Sexism: Alive and Well

The 2016 presidential campaign revealed that sexism is alive and well, though not always recognized, explicit, or acknowledged even when obvious. The media, both before and after the election, generally underplayed the impact of sexism despite research showing that sexist attitudes, not political party, were more likely to predict voters preference for Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton.[115]

The campaign also reflected a persistent double standard. Despite widespread agreement that Hillary Clinton was highly qualified to be president, her judgment, competence, "stamina," and even her proven accomplishments were subjected to scrutiny and criticism not normally applied to similarly experienced male candidates. Additional gender-specific criteria were imposed: "likeability," "smiling enough," "warmth," and appearance. She did not "look" "presidential"—an image of leadership that evoked the stereotype baboon model! But being six feet tall with large biceps and acting "tough" and "aggressive" probably would have disqualified her, as a woman, from the start! Other traits that are acceptable in men—ambitious, goal-focused, strategic, "wanting" the presidency—were treated as liabilities in Clinton, part of a "power-hungry" critique, as though women are not legitimately supposed to pursue or hold power.

Patriarchal Stereotypes of Women

Hillary Clinton's candidacy seems to have activated long-standing patriarchal stereotypes and images of women. One is the "good vs. bad" woman opposition. The "good" woman is chaste, obedient, nurturing, self-sacrificing, gentle—the Virgin Mary/Mother figure. The "bad" woman is greedy, selfish, independent, aggressive, and often, sexually active—importantly, she lies, deceives, is totally untrustworthy. Bad ("nasty") women in myths and reality must be punished for their transgressions; they are dangerous to men and threaten the social order.

As a researcher and someone who had many conversations with voters during this election, I was shocked by the intensity and level of animosity directed at Hillary Clinton. It was palpable, and it went far beyond a normal critique of a normal candidate. At Republican rallies, mass shouts of "lock her up" and T-shirts and bumper stickers bearing slogans like "Trump that Bitch" (and worse) bore a frightening resemblance to violence-inciting hate-speech historically directed at African-Americans and at Jews, gays, and socialists in Nazi Germany, as well as to hate-filled speech that fueled Medieval European witch-burnings in which thousands (if not millions) of people, mainly women, were burned at the stake ["burn the witch"].[116] Clinton was indeed challenging traditional gender roles in U.S. politics, the workplace, and at home. Patriarchy was being threatened, and many, though not all, voters found that profoundly disturbing even though they did not necessarily recognize it or admit it.[117]

Beyond that, there is a long tradition of blaming women for personal and societal disasters—for convincing Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, for the breakup of joint family households in places like India. Women often become the repository for people's frustrations when things "go wrong" (Remember the spoiled sausage in Portuguese culture discussed earlier in this chapter?). Women—like minorities, immigrants, and "evil empires"—are culturally familiar, available targets to which one can legitimately assign blame, frustration, and even rage, as we saw in the 2016 election.[118]

Hillary Clinton as a Symbol of Change

Ironically, Hillary Clinton was sometimes depicted and criticized during the campaign as a symbol of the "establishment" while her key opponents stood for "change." I think it is just the opposite. Hillary Clinton and her campaign and coalition symbolized (and embraced) the major transformations—indeed, upheavals—that have occurred in the United States since the 1960s. It is not just feminism and a new definition of masculinity that rejects the old baboon male-dominance tough-guy model, although that is one change.[119] While economic anxiety and "white nationalism" both played roles, the election was also about an "America" that is changing demographically, socially, religiously, sexually, linguistically, technologically, and ideologically—changing what constitutes "truth" and reality. For many in rural areas, outside forces—especially the government, run by liberal, urban elites—are seen as trying to control one's way of life with gun control, environmental regulations, ending coal mining, banning school (Christian) prayer, requiring schools to teach evolution and comprehensive sex education (vs. abstinence only). Hillary Clinton, her coalition, and her alignment with the Obama White House, not just

with its policies but with an African American "first family," symbolized the intersection of all these social, demographic, and cultural transformations. She truly represented "change."

Ironically, Clinton's opponents, even in the Democratic Party, were more "establishment" candidates culturally, demographically, and in their gender relationships. Bernie Sanders attracted an enormous, enthusiastic following and came close to winning the Democratic presidential primary. Yet his rhetoric and policy proposals, while unusual in twenty-first century mainstream politics, resembled the economic inequality, anti-Wall Street, "it's only about economics" focus of early twentieth century democratic socialists such as Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas and of progressive Henry Wallace. And, not surprisingly, Sanders appealed largely to Euro-American demographic groups rather than to the broader spectrum of twenty-first century voters.

In short, the election and the candidacy of Hillary Rodham Clinton symbolized more than half a century of enormous change—and a choice between continuing that change or selecting a candidate who symbolized what was traditional, familiar, and, to many, more comfortable. Whether the transformations of the past fifty years will be reversed remains to be seen.[120]

Discussion

From a global perspective, the United States lags behind many countries in women's political representation. In 2016, U.S. women constituted only nineteen percent of Congress, **below** the world average of twenty-three percent, the average in the Americas, twenty-eight percent, and far below Nordic countries, forty-one percent. In June 2023, women rose to 28.7 percent of the U.S. House and 25 percent of the Senate. Yet the U.S. remains low in global rankings of female representation in national legislative bodies. In 2020, the U.S. was 88th of 192 countries, way behind top-ranking Rwanda and Cuba, with sixty one percent and fifty three percent respectively. As of June 2023, the U.S. was still only 72nd of 186 countries, just below Iraq (seventy-one), but ahead of Jamaica (seventy-three), Poland (seventy-eight), Ukraine (111), and Korea (120). Rwanda and Cuba remained on top with Papua New Guinea (184), Kuwait and Yemen (both 185) bringing up the rear.

When it comes to political leadership, over sixty-three nations have elected at least one woman as their head of state, including countries with predominantly Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and/or Buddhist populations. The U.S. still has never elected a woman as President. And women rarely lead U.S. states. In 2021, there were only nine female governors (of fifty), one of whom ascended to power after the elected male stepped down amid charges of sexual harassment. In 2022, the number of female governors rose to an all-time high, twelve, with New York's female governor elected in her own right. Yet women are still a paltry sixteen percent of all U.S. governors. Interestingly, many self-styled progressive, heavily Democratic states have never elected females to top leadership positions (California, Illinois, Pennsylvania). In 2022, Los Angeles elected its first female (and second African American) mayor; meanwhile, Chicago lost its first female (and third African American) mayor. New York, Denver, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Philadelphia are among the eleven of the thirty-seven largest U.S. cities that as of 2022 had never elected a female mayor. But in 2022 Vermont finally elected its first woman to Congress.[121]

Are you surprised by these data and by how many countries rank higher than the United States? Why are you surprised? And why might the U.S. be so far behind other countries?

Additional Resources and Links
Center for American Women and Politics
Institute for Women's Policy Research
Pew Research Institute
United Nations, UN Women

CONTEMPORARY ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO STUDYING SEXUALITY AND GENDER

Contemporary anthropology now recognizes the crucial role played by gender in human society. Anthropologists in the post-2000 era have focused on exploring fluidity within and beyond sexuality, incorporating a gendered lens into all anthropological research, and applying feminist science frameworks, discourse-narrative analyses, political theory, critical studies of race, and queer theory to better understand and theorize gendered dynamics and power. Pleasure, desire, trauma, mobility, coercion,

bio-politics, globalization, immigration, nationalism, religion and other areas of anthropological inquiry have also informed gender and sexuality studies.[122]

Heteronormativity and Sexuality

Human sexual relationships, as we have seen, are surprisingly varied over time and space. But in traditional American culture and religion, the "normal" partnership is **heteronormative**, that is, involves one biological man and one biological woman in a sexually exclusive relationship, legitimized by the state and federal government and often sanctioned by a religious institution. **Heteronormativity** is a term coined by French philosopher Michel Foucault to refer to the often-unnoticed system of rights and privileges that accompany socially and culturally sanctioned (i.e. "normative") sexual choices and family formation.

Despite pervasive messages reinforcing heteronormative social relations in the U.S. and elsewhere, people find other ways to satisfy their sexual desires and organize their families. Increasingly, they choose partners who attract them—perhaps female, perhaps male, and perhaps someone with ambiguous physical sexual characteristics.

New labels challenge our old binary view of sexuality. Rather than thinking of individuals as either heterosexual OR homosexual, we now recognize a *spectrum* of sexual orientations. New personhood categories, such as bisexual, queer, questioning, lesbian, and gay reflect this more-fluid, shifting, expansive, and ambiguous conception of sexuality and sexual identity. **Transgender** is a category for people who identify as a different gender than the one assigned to them at birth. This may entail a social transition or a physical one. Anthropologist David Valentine explored how the concept of "transgender" became established in the United States and found that many people identified by others as transgender did not embrace the label themselves. Like all labels, its meanings have changed over time.

By 2021, an estimated 13.04 million people in the United States identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender. These numbers are increasing. In 2021, according to a Gallup poll, 5.6 percent of Americans identified as LGBT. These communities represent a vibrant, growing, and increasingly politically and economically powerful segment of the population.[123] Like the U.S. population overall, the LGBTQ community is extremely diverse. Not everyone consciously self-identifies by sexual orientation; other identities count such as ethnicity, religion, gender, or profession. Some scholars suggest the term **cisgender** for those who identify with the sex and the gender they were assigned at birth.[124]Only when labels are universal rather than used only for non-normative groups, they argue, will people become aware of discrimination based on differences in sexual preference. Some people prefer to eliminate acronyms altogether, embracing less static terms like *genderfluid* and *genderqueer.* These shifts and debates demonstrate that, like the terms themselves, LGBTQ communities in the United States are diverse and dynamic with often-changing priorities and makeup.

Changing Attitudes toward LGBTQ People in the United States

In the last two decades, attitudes toward LGBTQ people have changed dramatically. The most sweeping change is the extension of marriage rights to lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. By 2014, more than half of U.S. Americans said they believed same-sex couples should have the right to marry, and on June 26, 2015, in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the U.S. supreme court declared that same-sex couples had the legal right to marry.[125] Legalization of same-sex marriage also helped normalize same-sex parenting. Few civil rights movements have seen such progress in such a short period of time. Sociologists and anthropologists identified increased awareness of and exposure to LGBTQ people through the media and personal interactions as playing key roles.[126]

But same-sex marriage has not been welcomed everywhere in the United States. Anthropologist Jessica Johnson profiled a Seattle-based megachurch and their efforts to oppose same-sex marriage, with special attention to the ways in which rhetorics of gender, masculinity, and cisgender sexuality were used by the church and its pastor.[127] Official church communications dismissed homosexuality as aberrant and mobilized members to advocate against same-sex marriage. Other groups, often religious, have organized to "protect family values", i.e. the heteronormative gender hierarchical "traditional" model of family and sexuality.

Some activists and scholars have expressed concern over incorporating marriage—a heteronormative institution—into spaces not previously governed by state authority. To sociologist Tamara Metz and others, legally intertwining passion, romance, sexual intimacy, and economic rights and responsibilities is not necessarily a move in the right direction.[128]

While U.S. culture on the whole has become more supportive and accepting of LGBTQ people, they still face challenges. Until the 2020 Supreme Court ruling *Bostock v. Clay County*, sexual orientation and gender identity were not federally protected statuses. Twenty percent of LGBTQ adults reported experiencing homelessness before they turned 18, often thrust into homelessness by family rejection.[129] Transgender people are the most vulnerable and experience high levels of violence, including homicide.

For an activity related to this section, see Activity 4. Bathroom Transgression, on the Teaching & Learning Resources section of the Perspectives website. https://perspectives.americananthro.org/teaching/ Gender-and-Sexuality-Learning-Resources.pdf

Heteronormativity and Sexuality Around the World

Same-sex sexual and romantic relationships probably exist in every society, but categories like "gay," "lesbian," and "bisexual" are cultural inventions. They reflect culturally specific beliefs about gender, sexuality, and how sexual preferences develop. In many cultures same-sex sex is a **behavior**, not an identity, not an internal sense of "who you are." It is something you do, an activity you engage in, for certain purposes, which may or may not be sexual. Among the Sambia, for example, it was traditionally the practice for young boys to receive semen from older males (through oral sex). In their theory of human development, semen was a crucial substance for healthy male growth, for eventually marrying a woman and fathering children, and for becoming a "real man."

Some individuals in India practice "female-female sexuality" or "male-male sexuality." While this might involve a deep relationship and intimate sexual behavior, it refers to behavior and social relationships, not some internal, fixed, fundamental identity. The film *Fire* by Deepa Mehta aroused tremendous controversy in India not only because it graphically depicted a same-sex relationship between two married women, but because it suggested alternatives available to women stuck in unhappy and abusive patriarchal marriages.[130] In some cultures, whether one is "homosexual" or "heterosexual" is not linked simply to engaging in same-sex sexual behavior. Instead, as among Brazilian males studied by anthropologist Don Kulick, your status in the sexual relationship, literally and symbolically, depends on (or determines!) whether you are the inserter or the penetrated.[131]Which would you expect involves higher status?

Even anthropologists who are sensitive to cross-cultural variations in the terms and understandings that accompany same-sex sexual and romantic relationships can still unconsciously project their own meanings onto other cultures. Evelyn Blackwood, an American, described how surprised she was to realize that her Sumatran lover, who called herself a "Tombois," had a different conception of what con-

stituted a lesbian identity and lesbian relationship than she did.[132]We must be careful not to assume that other cultures share LGBTQ identities as they are understood in the United States and many European countries.

Furthermore, countries approach sexuality and marriage in ways that reflect their specific histories and social-political circumstances. Biological reproduction, that is, producing offspring, is often a central concern. In Israel, an embrace of pro-natalist policies for Jewish Israelis has meant that expensive reproductive technologies such as in vitro fertilization are provided to women at no cost or are heavily subsidized. LGBTQ activists from other countries were surprised when they found that nearly all Israeli female same-sex couples were raising children. Not surprisingly, Israel's embrace of same-sex parenting did not initially extend to male couples until a 2020 Supreme Court decision legalized male parenthood through surrogacy. The pro-natalist policies can be traced in part to Israel's origins: the modern state has promoted policies that encourage births partly to counter historic attempts to destroy the Jewish people. The contexts may be less dramatic elsewhere, but local and national histories often inform policies and practices.

In Thailand, Ara Wilson has explored how biological women embrace identities as *toms* and *dees*. Although these terms seem to be derived from English-language concepts (*dees* is etymologically related to "ladies"), suggesting international influences, the ubiquity and acceptance of *toms* and *dees* in Thailand diverges from patterns in the United States.[133]

In China (as elsewhere), the experiences of those involved in male-male sexuality and those involved in female-female sexuality can differ. In her book *Shanghai Lalas: Female Tongzhi Communities and Politics in Urban China*, Lucetta Yip Lo Kam discusses how lesbians in China note their lack of public social spaces compared with gay men.[134] Even the words *lala* and *tongzhi* index different categories from the English terms: *lala* encompasses lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people while *tongzhi* is a gloss term that usually refers to gay men but has been expanded in the last two decades to other uses. (*Tongzhi* is a cooptation of the Chinese-language socialist-era term for *comrade*.)

Language makes a difference in how individuals and communities articulate their identities. Anthropologists such as Kam have commented on how sharing their own backgrounds with those with whom they work can be instrumental in gaining trust and building rapport. Her identity as a Chinese-speaking queer anthropologist and activist from Hong Kong helped women in Shanghai feel comfortable speaking with her and willing to include her in their networks.From these examples, we see that approaches to sexuality in different parts of the world are evolving, just as gender norms in the United States are undergoing tremendous shifts.

Anthropology of the Body

Another important topic is the anthropology of the body, sometimes referred to as embodied anthropology.[135]Embodiment studies explore how bodies serve as sites for learning, experiencing, and expressing gender. They also investigate how the body enters into popular debates on broader issues, such as politics, religion, and national identity. Topics that have attracted particular attention include popular and scientific representations of the body; (dis)ability; the anthropology of obesity; the politics of reproduction; coercion; complex issues associated with genital modifications such as female circumcision; and the relationship between bodies and borders.[136]

Anthropologists explore the discourses surrounding women's bodies and reproductive processes. Emily Martin's pioneering book, *The Woman in the Body*, critically examined lay women and medical descriptions of menstruation, childbearing, and menopause in the United States. She identified a scientific ideology of reproduction that is infused with traditional U.S. binary gender stereotypes similar to

those in man-the-hunter origin stories. In her classic essay about what she calls a "scientific fairy tale," Martin describes how U.S. biology texts represented the egg and sperm as romantic partners whose actions are described with passive or active verbs according to gendered assumptions.[137]

> I realized that the picture of egg and sperm drawn in popular as well as scientific accounts of reproductive biology relies on stereotypes central to our cultural definitions of male and female. The stereotypes imply not only that female biological processes are less worthy than their male counterparts but also that women are less worthy than men. Part of my goal in writing this article is to shine a bright light on the gender stereotypes hidden within the scientific language of biology.[138]

Subsequent work has challenged the "sperm penetrates egg" model of fertilization, noting that it is medically inaccurate and reinforces male-active-dominant, female-passive (penetrated) gender models. In reality, the egg and sperm fuse, but the egg activates the sperm by releasing molecules that are crucial for it to find and adhere to the egg.[139] Old videos like *The Miracle of Life* offer, in their narration and background music, striking examples of the cultural ideology of reproduction in the United States that Martin and others have described.[140]

Some research analyzes the body, especially the female body, as a site of coercion and expression of power relations by individuals. This ranges from physical assault and intimate partner violence, sexualized and otherwise, to less blatant but equally damaging—and threatening—efforts to control and psychologically manipulate partners. Workplaces, too, are sites for coercion, from sexual harassment to assault. We can ask, what social and cultural contexts most lend themselves to such coercion? What occupations, in what circumstances, can be characterized as coercive, as sexual assault, even if legal? What about prostitution by poor women or child prostitution, which some would call sexual slavery? Child marriage? Some types of pornography? Coercion is a complex issue.[141]

But state-sanctioned collective acts also occur, especially during wars, such as using systematic civilian rape as a form of psychological warfare or forcing females to be "sex slaves." Anthropologists document other ways in which states exert power over bodies—through family planning policies, restricting (or allowing) access to contraception, sex education and abortion, legislation that bans (or permits) artificial forms of conception, and government programs to promote fertility, including subsidized infertility treatments.[142]Turkish anthropologists have described how state policies incorporated, for their own purposes, sexual issues of concern to Turkish families, such as assisted reproduction for disabled war veterans and treatment of vaginismus, a condition that prevents women from engaging in sexual intercourse. Power relationships are also associated with new reproductive technologies. The availability of amniocentesis in societies which traditionally prefer sons can shift the ratio of male to female babies. Unequal power relations are also in play between surrogate mothers (often poor women) and wealthier surrogate families desiring children.[143]Nations and other political groups use women's (and men's) bodies to address broader issues. Women's clothing, in particular, arouses intense discussion and regulation. Sexuality and female "modesty" are long-standing s issues in large-scale, stratified societies and in all major religions. Today, such discussions often center around the "hijab" (headscarf) or other female body coverings. Although European Christian women may wear similar coverings (Eastern Europe, U.S. nuns), their current association, at least in the US, is primarily with Muslim women. The issue arouses tremendous passion and controversy, whether in Western European countries with large Muslim populations, such as France, or in primarily Muslim countries like Turkey and Malaysia.

But this is not just about clothing. It goes deeper, with linkages to "identity" and "belonging." At the personal level, wearing the "hijab" may express one's identity as a Muslim and as a "good" Muslim woman. But at the state level, it is often about national identity. Women's bodies have entered nationalist, political discourses about the direction the nation should take. Should the country proceed along

the path of "modernity", often associated with "Westernization" and "colonialism", secularism and values of individualism and personal freedom. Or should the country reclaim and reassert its own national and cultural roots, its own (non-Christian) religion, its own system of values, of laws. For many formerly colonized countries, like Malaysia or Indonesia, this includes replacing colonial-imposed legal and family systems (often based on Christianity) with ones based on Shari'a and other Islamist legal traditions. In this context, women's clothing and bodies become symbols for expressing alternative, and sometimes opposing, views of nationhood. In the United States, Muslim women's covered bodies have been used, sometimes cynically, as symbols of their "oppression" and to justify foreign policy towards Muslim countries, from sanctions to invasion and occupation. Clearly, bodies are not simply biological entities but incredible potential sites for social, cultural, and political messaging.[144]

Gender Within the Discipline of Anthropology

As seen earlier in this chapter, gender has long shaped anthropological theory, partially because most anthropologists in the past were male and brought their perspectives into their theorizing. But female anthropologists have always played a key role in anthropology. Some, like Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Cora DuBois, and Zora Neale Hurston not only made major theoretical contributions but became immensely popular and influential public figures. Margaret Mead, in particular, challenged prevailing US notions of gender and sexuality.[145]

Fieldwork

Gender affects the fieldwork experience. Women face particular challenges conducting fieldwork in sex-segregated, patriarchal societies. Sometimes women fieldworkers are perceived as more vulnerable than men to sexual harassment, and their romantic choices in fieldwork situations are subject to greater scrutiny than those of men.[146] Women may be more likely to juggle family and professional responsibilities and bring their children to the field. This may raise eyebrows at first because of perceived risks to children and potential negative impacts on the anthropologist's planned work. But for many female (and male) anthropologists, fieldwork undertaken with their families is a transformative experience both professionally and personally. Arriving at a field site with the recognizable identities of parent, daughter or son or spouse can help people conceptualize the anthropologist as someone beyond a camera-toting interviewer and observer, as Eriberto P. Lozada Jr. discovered when he arrived to do fieldwork on village Catholicism in southeastern China with his wife and son. Previously, his identity as an unaccompanied man had raised suspicions and made it virtually impossible to speak to the village nuns. His family's presence literally "opened the door" for him to befriend these women and earn the trust of other villagers as well.[147]

More anthropologists now conduct fieldwork in their home communities. Some wish to explore theoretical and empirical questions best examined in local field sites. Others are reluctant or unable to relocate their families or partners to the "field". Conducting fieldwork close to home can be a less expensive option than going abroad! But the boundaries of field and home can become quite porous, especially for women. In their writings, women anthropologists reveal how the realms of public and private and political and personal are connected. Innovative, activist, and self-reflective studies address intersections that other scholars treat separately.[148]

Academic Anthropology in the United States

Though the representation of women in U.S. academic anthropology is now proportional to their

numbers in the Ph.D. pool, discrepancies remain between male and female anthropology professors in rank and publication rates. A 2008 report on the status of women in anthropology found a continuing presence of the "old boys' network"—the tendency for men in positions of power to develop relationships with other men, which creates pooled resources, positive performance evaluations, and promotions for those men but not for women. Furthermore, since women in the United States are usually socialized to avoid making demands, they often accept lower salary offers than could have been negotiated, with significant long-term financial consequences.[149]

Women are also over-represented among non-tenure-track anthropology faculty members, paid relatively small per-course stipends, with heavy teaching loads that leave little time for research and publishing. Married women often prioritize their partners' careers, limiting their geographic flexibility and job (and fieldwork) opportunities. Left with few academic job options in a given area, they may leave academia altogether.

On a positive note, women have an increasingly prominent place in the highest ranks of anthropology, including as presidents of the American Anthropological Association. Nonetheless, systemic gender inequality continues to affect the careers of female anthropologists. Given what we know about gender systems, we should not be surprised.

Masculinity Studies

Students in gender studies and anthropology courses on gender are often surprised to find that they will be learning about men as well as women. Early women's studies initially focused on making women more visible, especially in academic disciplines, addressing women's issues, and examining "female" as a social construct. In the 1990s, women's studies expanded, incorporating the study of other genders, sexuality, and issues of gender and social justice.[150] Gender was recognized as being fundamentally relational: femaleness is linked to maleness, femininity to masculinity. One outgrowth of that work is the field of "masculinity studies."[151]

Masculinity studies explore the cultural meanings and behaviors associated with being male in different societies and contexts, as well as how these meanings and behaviors are learned, performed, manipulated, and represented. Scholars have zeroed in on the processes through which males construct "maleness." One focus is the ways in which boys learn about and learn to perform "manhood." Many U.S. studies (and several excellent videos, such as *Tough Guise 2, Dreamworlds 3, HipHop*), examine the role of popular culture in teaching boys key concepts of masculinity, such as being "tough" and "strong," and how this "tough guise" stance affects men's relationships with women, with other men, and with societal institutions, reinforcing a culture of violent, "toxic", masculinity. Sociologist Michael Kimmel has further suggested that US boys are taught that they live in a "perilous world" he terms "Guyland"[152]

Recent studies explore how gender functions in wealthier, post-industrial societies and communities with access to new technologies and mass media.[153] Anthropologists sometimes turn to unconventional information sources, including popular television commercials. The 2015 Super Bowl commercials produced for the Always feminine product brand focused on gender themes in its #Likeagirl campaign which probed the damaging connotations of the phrases "throw like a girl" and "run like a girl" by first asking boys and girls to act out running and throwing, and then asking them to act out a *girl* running and throwing. A companion clip further explored the negative impacts of anti-girl messages, provoking dialogue among Super Bowl viewers and in social media spaces (though, ironically, that dialogue was intended to promote consumption of feminine products). As the clips remind us, while boys and men play major roles in perceptions related to gender, so do the women who raise them, often reinforcing gendered expectations for play and aspiration. Of course, women, like men, are enculturated

into their culture's gender ideology.[154]Both girls and boys—and adults—are profoundly influenced by popular culture.

Though many scholars publish important work on masculinity, anthropologists, with their cross-cultural approach, have deepened and enriched interdisciplinary understandings. Anthropologists began exploring concepts of masculinity cross-culturally as early as the 1970s, describing varied beliefs and practices in small-scale societies, such as New Guinea. These included Ortner and Whitehead's volume, *Sexual Meanings* and Gilmore's *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts in Masculinity*.[155]Perhaps most provocative was Herdt's work on the Sambia where achieving manhood, as we noted earlier, traditionally required male-male exchange of semen through oral sex. Ironically, Sambia conceptions of masculinity, like prototypic American models, emphasized "toughness", "strength" and being good "warriors" able to withstand and inflict pain without flinching.

While anthropologists also provide nuanced portrayals of men in the United States, (for example, in prison, heroin users, migrant laborers, and athletes), their distinctive contribution continues to be their cross-cultural, comparative perspective.[156] They offer vivid accounts of expectations of men in other societies and linkages to phenomenon from warfare to political leadership styles to rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Peggy Sanday's cross-cultural comparisons of rape, for example, identified a cultural model of manhood that produced a kind of toxic masculinity which, among other things, was linked to high rates of sexual violence against women. In her research on U.S. college campus rape, Sanday found a similar model of toxic masculinity was pervasive in fraternity culture with similar consequences. Particular models of manhood may also have health consequences. Early research on COVID-19 suggested that countries with "strongmen" type political leaders, such as the USA, Brazil, India, had far higher infection and death rates than countries with female leaders (e.g. New Zealand, Bangladesh, Germany, Iceland).[157]

Not all societies expect men to be "tough guys" and those that do go about it in different ways.[158]In Sichuan Province in China, young Nuosu men must prove their maturity through risky behavior such as theft. In recent years, theft has been supplanted for many by heroin use, particularly as young men have left their home communities for urban areas (where they are often feared by city residents and attract suspicion).[159]Meanwhile, in the Middle East, technologies such as assisted reproduction are challenging and reshaping ideas about masculinity among some Arab men, particularly men who acknowledge and struggle with infertility. There and elsewhere, conceptions of fatherhood are considered crucial components of masculinity. In Japan, for example, a man who has not fathered a child may not be considered fully adult.[160]

Elsewhere, as we saw earlier, men are expected to be gentle nurturers of young children and to behave in ways that do not fit typical U.S. stereotypes—though these, too, are changing. In Na communities, men dote on babies and small children, often rushing to pick them up when they enter a room. In other places, men are starting to embrace alternative notions of masculinity that allow them to express their emotional, nurturing capacities. Anthropologists like Marcia Inhorn argue that conventional scholarship on reproduction has essentially ignored males, as biological and social partners in the parenting process, with their own reproductive rights. In volumes like *Globalized Fatherhood*, authors explore how fatherhood, like motherhood, is socially constructed and shaped by local and larger global contexts. They describe how economic transformations, like migration for work, is transforming men's lives as husbands and fathers. In particular, the migration of women, increasingly common in places like the Philippines and Kerala, India, is producing profound changes in how men engage in parenting and think of themselves as fathers and spouses. Other anthropologists describe the growing desire of fathers to participate in the birth rituals with their wives. They note that men are often excluded from childbirth settings, such as in Japan.

The spread of global media culture offers alternative models of masculinity. In South Korea, men in wildly popular singing groups wear eyeliner and elaborate clothing that would be unusual for U.S. groups. Throughout China and India, as in many other parts of the world, heterosexual men walk down the street holding hands or arm-in-arm without causing raised eyebrows. Physical, non-sexual contact between men, especially in sex-segregated societies, may be more common than between men and women. Touch is a human form of intimacy that need not have sexual implications. If male-male relations are the most intimate in a society, physical expression of those relationships is predictable unless there is a cultural fear of male physical intimacy. There is much more nuance in actual behavior than initial appearances lead people to believe.

Anthropologists are also engaging in more-intimate discussions of males' self-perceptions, dilemmas, and challenges and have not hesitated to intercede, carefully, in the communities in which they work. Visual anthropologist Harjant Gill, conducting research in the Punjab region of India, began asking men about pressures they faced and found that the conversations prompted unexpected reflection. Gill titled his film *Mardistan (Macholand)* and shepherded the film through television broadcasts and smaller-scale viewings to encourage wide discussion in India of the issues he explored.[161]

See Activity 5: Analyzing Gendered Stereotypes and Masculinity in Music Videos, on the Teaching & Learning Resources section of the Perspectives website, https://perspectives.americananthro.org/teaching/Gender-and-Sexuality-Learning-Resources.pdf

CONCLUSION

In 1968, a cigarette company in the United States decided to target women as tobacco consumers and used a clever marketing campaign to entice them to take up smoking. "You've come a long way, baby!" billboards proclaimed. Women, according to the carefully constructed rhetoric, had moved away from their historic oppressed status and could—and should—now enjoy the full complement of twentieth-century consumer pleasures. Like men, they deserved to enjoy themselves and relax with a cigarette. The campaigns were extremely successful; within several years, smoking rates among women had increased dramatically. But had women really come a long way? Which women? In which cultures? In what ways? Was the ad actually drawing upon old ethnocentric stereotypes about the supposed "progress" women made with "civilization", especially European Christian civilization, and in the United States?

We now know that tobacco (including in vaporized form) is a highly addictive substance and that its use is correlated with a host of serious health conditions. In responding to the marketing rhetoric, women possibly enjoyed increased independence, but they did so at a huge cost to their health. They also succumbed to a long-term financial relationship with tobacco companies who relied on addicting individuals in order to profit. Knowing about the structures at work behind the scenes and the risks they took, few people today would agree that women's embrace of tobacco represented a huge step forward.

Perhaps saying "You've come a long way, baby!" with the cynical interpretation with which we read it today can serve as an analogy for our contemporary explorations of gender and culture. Certainly, many women in the United States today enjoy heightened freedoms. We can travel to previously forbidden spaces, study disciplines long considered the domain of men, shape our families to meet our own needs, work in whatever field we choose, and, we believe, live according to our own wishes. But we would be naïve to ignore how gender continues to shape, constrain, and even threaten all of our lives,

as females and males, and how far away we still are from dismantling patriarchal legacies. The research and methods of anthropology can help us become more aware of the ongoing consequences of our gendered heritage and the ways in which we are all complicit in maintaining gender ideologies that limit and restrict people's possibilities.

Discussion Questions

1.   What is "natural" about how you experience gender and human sexuality? What aspects are at least partially shaped by culture? How do other cultures' beliefs and practices regarding gender and sexuality differ from those commonly found in the United States? Are there any parallels? Does it depend on which U.S. community we are talking about? What about your own beliefs and practices?

2.   Reflect on the various ways you have "learned" about gender and sexuality throughout your life. Which influences do you think had the biggest impact?

3.   How important is your gender to how you think about yourself, to your "identity" or self-definition, to your everyday life? Reflect on what it would be like to be a different gender.

4.   How important is your "sexuality" and "sexual orientation" to how you think about yourself, to your identity or self-definition? Reflect on what it would be like if you altered your sexual identity or practices.

5.   In what ways have your school settings been shaped by and around gender norms?

6.   How are anthropologists influenced by gender norms? How has this affected the discipline of anthropology?

GLOSSARY

Androgyny: cultural definitions of gender that acknowledge the huge variability in capacities and preferences within each sex/gender and encourage sex-role flexibility, fluidity and individual-based role behavior.

Binary model of gender: cultural definitions of gender that include only two identities–male and female.

Biologic sex: refers to male and female identity based on internal and external sex organs and chromosomes. While male and female are the most common biologic sexes, a percentage of the human population is intersex with ambiguous or mixed biological sex characteristics.

Biological determinism: a theory that biological differences between males and females lead to fundamentally different capacities, preferences, and gendered behaviors. This scientifically unsupported view suggests that gender roles are rooted in biology, not culture.

Cisgender: a term used to describe those whose gender identity coincides with the biologic sex they were assigned at birth.

Dyads: two people in a socially approved pairing. One example is a married couple.

Essentialism. A belief that gender and certain other social categories are inherent, fixed, internal, stable, deeply embedded, and unchangeable.

Gender: the set of culturally and historically invented beliefs and expectations about gender that one learns and performs. Gender is an "identity" one can choose in some societies, but there is pressure in all societies to conform to conventional gender roles and identities.

Gender ideology: a complex set of beliefs about gender and gendered capacities, propensities, preferences, identities and socially expected behaviors and interactions that apply to males, females, and other gender categories. Gender ideology can differ among cultures and is acquired through enculturation.

Also known as a cultural model of gender.

Heteronormativity: a term coined by French philosopher Michel Foucault to refer to the often-unnoticed system of rights and privileges that accompany normative sexual choices and family formation.

Legitimizing ideologies: a set of complex belief systems, often developed by those in power, to rationalize, explain, and perpetuate systems of inequality.

Matrifocal: groups of related females (e.g. mother-her sisters-their offspring**)** form the core of the family and constitute the family's most central and enduring social and emotional ties.

Matrilineal: societies where descent or kinship group membership is transmitted through women, from mothers to their children (male and female), and then through daughters, to their children, and so forth.

Matrilocal: a female-centered kin-based extended family household which results from males, after marriage, moving to the household of their wives. Related females (mothers-daughters-sisters) form the core of the household.

Patriarchy: describes a society with a male-dominated political and authority structure and an ideology that privileges males over females in domestic and public spheres.

Patrifocal: groups of related males (e.g. a father-his brothers) and their male offspring form the core of the family and constitute the family's most central and enduring social and emotional ties.

Patrilineal: societies where descent or kinship group membership is transmitted through men, from men to their children (male and female), and then through sons, to their children, and so forth.

Patrilocal: a male-centered kin-based extended family household which results from females, after marriage, moving to the household of their husbands. Related males (fathers-sons-brothers) form the core of the household.

Third gender: a gender identity that exists in non-binary gender systems offering one or more gender roles separate from male or female.

Transgender: a category for people who or people who identify as a different gender than the one that was assigned to them at birth. This may entail a social transition or a physical one, using a number of methods.

Learning Activities and Additional Resources

A set of learning activities designed to complement the material in this chapter is available in the Teaching & Learning Resources section of the Perspectives website, along with suggested additional resources for exploring the issues raised in this chapter. For direct link to a PDF file of these resources: https://perspectives.americananthro.org/teaching/Gender-and-Sexuality-Learning-Resources.pdf

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Acknowledgments

Notes

1. The Introduction, most of the theoretical, analytical material in the Foundations segment, and portions of Contemporary Approaches draws upon and synthesizes Mukhopadhyay's decades of research, writing, and teaching courses on culture, gender, and human sexuality. Some of it has been published (cf. citations in endnotes). Other material comes from lecture notes. See http://www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay.

2. We use quotation marks here and elsewhere in the chapter to alert readers to a culturally specific, culturally invented concept in the United States. We need to approach U.S. cultural inventions the same way we would a concept we encountered in a foreign, so-called "exotic" culture.

3. See Carolyn B. Brettell and Carolyn F. Sargent, *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective, 7th edition* (New York: Rout-ledge, 2017). Also, Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Myths of Gender. Biological Theories About Women and Men* (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

4. For an example of a textbook, see Herant A. Katchadurian, *Fundamentals of Human Sexuality* (Fort Worth, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1989).

5. Material in the following paragraphs comes from Mukhopadhyay, unpublished Human Sexuality lecture notes, https://www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay/courses/AnthBioHS140

6. Herant A. Katchadurian, *Fundamentals of Human Sexuality,* 365.

7. Phyllis Kaberry, *Women of the Grassfields. A Study of the Economic Position of Women in Bamenda, British Cameroons* (Colonial Research publication 14. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1952). See also http://www.era.anthropology.ac.uk/Kaberry/Kaberry_text/

8. See Barry S. Hewlett, *Intimate Fathers: The Nature and Context of Aka Pygmy Paternal Infant Care* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991); and personal communication with Mukhopadhyay.

9. W.H. Masters and V.E. Johnson, *Human Sexual Response* (New York: Bantam Books, 1966).

10. Some feminist scholars have also questioned the "naturalness" of the biological categories male and female. See for example, Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999 [1990]).

11. For genital similarities, see Janet S. Hyde and John D. DeLamater, *Understanding Human Sexuality* (McGraw Hill, 2020), 93-97. For more parallels, see Mukhopadhyay's online Human Sexuality course materials, at https://www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay/courses/AnthBioHS140/

12. For some idea of the enormous variability in human physical characteristics, see Chapters 1 and 2 in C. Mukhopadhyay, R. Henze, and Y. Moses, *How Real is Race: Race, Culture and Biology* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014). For a profile of Ms. Olympia , see https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/wayne/2021/02/15/world-title-ms-olympia-andrea-shaw/6708212002/. See also Filipina weightlifter Hidilyn Diaz, who won the Olympic Gold Medal in 2021: https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/27/world/hidilyn-diaz-philip-pines-gold-olympics-intl-hnk/index.html. Interestingly, Interestingly, the 2020 male world champion received $400,000, while the female world champion received about one eighth of that amount.

13. Information about alternative gender roles in pre-contact Native American communities can be found in Martha Ward and Monica Edelstein, *A World Full of Women, 6th edition*. (Boston: Pearson, 2016). Also, see the 2011 PBS Independent Lens film *Two Spirits*, by Lydia Nibley, for an account of the role of two-spirit ideology in Navajo communities, including the story of a Navajo teenager who was the victim of a hate crime because of his two-spirit identity: https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/documentaries/two-spirits/

14. Martha Ward and Monica Edelstein, *A World Full of Women.*

15. Serena Nanda, *Neither Man nor Woman: the Hijras of India* (Boston, MA: Cengage, 1999); and Gayatri Reddy and Serena Nanda, "Hijras: An "Alternative" Sex/Gender in India," in *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, *7th Edition* ed. C. Brettell and C. Sargent, 278–285 (New York: Routledge, 2017).

16. Janet S. Hyde and John D. DeLamater, *Understanding Human Sexuality*, 2020, p.98 put the figure at two percent, using a 2000 reference, though it may be higher now; Martha Ward and Monica Edelstein, *A World Full of Women*, said five percent. We don't know if these are global or U.S. estimates. Regardless, the number is substantial.

17. Beverly Chinas, personal communication with Mukhopadhyay. See also her writings on Isthmus Zapotec women such as: Beverly Chinas, *The Isthmus Zapotecs: A Matrifocal Culture of Mexico* (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers ,1997). For a related film from the region, see Maureen Gosling and Ellen Osborne, *Blossoms of Fire*, Film (San Francisco: Film Arts Foundation, 2001). Other cross-cultural examples can be found in: Serena Nanda, *Gender Diversity: Cross-cultural Variations, 2nd Edition* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland 2014); and Sharyn G. Davies, *Challenging Gender Norms: Five Genders among the Bugis in Indonesia* (Prospect heights, IL: Waveland 2007)

18. Gilbert Herdt, *The Sambia* (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 2006). For an excellent film see Gilbert Herdt, *Guardians of the Flutes* (London UK: BBC, 1994).

19. More information about the Nu shu writing system can be found in the film by Yue-Qing Yang, *Nu Shu: A Hidden Language of Women in China* (New York: Women Make Movies, 1999).

20. Ernestine Friedl, *Women and Men: An Anthropologist's View* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975). See Audrey Richards, *Chisungu: A Girl's Initiation Ceremony among the Bemba of Zambia* (London: Faber, 1956) and A.

Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia, An Economic Study of the Bemba Tribe* (London: Oxford, 1939).

21. See for example, Ian Hogbin, *The Island of Menstruating Men: Religion in Wogeo, New Guinea* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1996 [1970]).

22. Susannah M Hoffman, Richard A Cowan and Paul Aratow, *Kypseli: Men and Women Apart A Divided Reality* (Berkeley CA: Berkeley Media, 1976).

23. Denise Lawrence, Menstrual Politics: Women and Pigs in Rural Portugal, in *Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation,* ed. Thomas Buckley and Alma Gottlieb, 117-136 (Berkeley: University of California Press. 1988.), 122-123.

24. See http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03k6k0h. Some women are posing with photos of menstrual pads and hashtags #happytobleed: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/indian-women-launch-happy-to-bleed-campaign-to-protest-against-sexist-religious-rule-a6748396.html

25. See the film by Michael Camerini and Rina Gill, *Dadi's Family* (Watertown, MA: DER, 1981).

26. Cynthia Nelson, "Public and Private Politics: Women in the Middle Eastern World" *American Ethnologist* 1 no. 3 (1974): 551-56.

27. Carol C. Mukhopadhyay, "Family Matters: Understanding Educational Choices and Gendered Science in India," in H.E. Ullrich, ed.. *The Impact of Education in South Asia* (New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2019), 53-82.

28. Elizabeth Fernea, *Guests of the Sheik.an Ethnography of an Iraqi Village* (New York: Anchor Books, 1965).

29. Susan Seymour, *Cora Du Bois: Anthropologist, Diplomat, Agent* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2015).

30. Carol C. Mukhopadhyay, "Women in Science: Is the Glass Ceiling Disappearing?" Proceedings of conference organized by the National Institute of Science and Technology Development Studies, the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India; Indian Council of Social Science Research; and the Indo-U.S. Science and Technology Forum. New Delhi, India, March 8–10, 2004.

31. See for instance, http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/a-powerful-documentary-about-pakistans-honor-killings and http://www.latimes.com/world/afghanistan-pakistan/la-fg-pakistan-oscar-20160229-story.html.

32. For more details, see the film by Leslee Udwin, *India's Daughter*. Women Make Movies release. The Wikipedia article notes the reluctance, and ultimate refusal, of the Indian government to allow the film to air in India: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India%27s_Daughter. For an interview about the controversy, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBVOdtuWuZs&ab_channel=CBCNews, For a passionate speech in the Indian Parliament, in Hindi and English, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oorpLTaKszA&ab_chan-nel=MangoNews

33. For a critique of the "myth" of the medieval chastity belt, see http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/sex/chastity-belts-the-odd-truth-about-locking-up-womens-genitalia.

34. See for example, the film by Sabiha Sumar, *Khamosh Pani: Silent Waters* (Mumbai, India: Shringar Film, 2003). While this is not a documentary, the film reflects the tumultuous history of the 1947 partition of British India into two countries, and the upheaval that resulted.

35. For the !Kung San, see Marjorie Shostak, *Nisa: Life and Words of a Kung Woman* (New York: Vintage, 1983). For Trobrianders, see Annette B. Weiner, *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea* (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1987).

36. Shanshan Du, *Chopsticks Only Work in Pairs: Gender Unity and Gender Equality Among the Lahu of Southwest China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

37. Zhou Huashan, *Zhong nu bu qingnan de muxi mosuo: Wufu de guodu?* [Matrilineal Mosuo, *Valuing Women without Devaluing Men: A Society without Fathers or Husbands*?] (Beijing: Guangming Ribao Chubanshe, 2009 [2001]).

38. Ernestine Friedl, *Women and Men: An Anthropologist's View* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975).

39. Carol C. Mukhopadhyay, "Sati or Shakti: Women, Culture and Politics in India," in *Perspectives on Power: Women in Asia, Africa and Latin America*, ed. Jean O'Barr, 11-26 (Durham: Center for International Studies, Duke University 1982).

40. Lila Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

41. Mukhopadhyay and Seymour use the term "patrifocal" to describe households that consist of related males, usually brothers, and their sons, and the spouses and children of those males. See C. Mukhopadhyay and S. Seymour, "Introduction," in Women, Family, and Education in India (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

42. For powerful documentaries see films by Nishta Jain, *Gulabi Gang* (Stavanger, Norway: Kudos Family Distribution, 2012) and by Kim Longinotto, *Pink Saris* (New York: Women Make Movies, 2011).

43. Lionel Tiger, *Men in Groups* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005[1969]), 45 .

44. Carol C. Mukhopadhyay, *The Sexual Division of Labor in the Family*, PhD Dissertation, University of California, Riverside, 1980, 192.

45. Carol C. Mukhopadhyay, fieldnotes, India; and Mukhopadhyay, The Cultural Context of Gendered Science: The Case of India, 2001, www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay/papers

46. For example, the major symposium on Man the Hunter sponsored by Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research included only four women among more than sixty listed participants. See Richard B. Lee and Irven DeVore, *Man the Hunter* (Chicago: Aldine Atherton, 1972[1968]), xiv–xvi.

47. This analysis and the following sections draw on Mukhopadhyay, Lecture Notes, Human Sexuality, Gender and Culture, as well as decades of research and reflection.

48. S.Washburn and C.S. Lancaster, "The Evolution of Hunting." in *Man the Hunter*, 299.

49. Ibid., 303.

50. Jackson Katz, *Tough Guise 2: Violence, Manhood and American Culture* (Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation, 2013).

51. Abigail Disney and Kathleen Hughes, *The Armor of Light* (New York: Fork Films, 2015).

52. Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox, *The Imperial Animal* (New York: Transaction Publishers, 1997 [1971]), 101.

53. Some useful reviews include the following: Linda M. Fedigan, "The Changing Role of Women in Models of Human Evolution" *Annual Review of Anthropology* 16 (1986): 25–66; Linda Fedigan, *Primate Paradigms: Sex Roles and Social Bonds* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Pamela L. Geller and Miranda K. Stockett. *Feminist Anthropology: Past, Present, and Future* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2006); Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey, *Engendering Archeology: Women and Prehistory* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1991); Shirley Strum and Linda Fedigan *Primate Encounters: Models of Science, Gender and Society*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Meredith F. Small, *What's Love Got to Do with It? The Evolution of Human Mating* (New York: Doubleday, 1995); Nancy Makepeace Tanner, *On Becoming Human* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For a readable short article, see Meredith Small, "What's Love Got to Do with It," *Discover Magazine,* June 1991, 46–51.

54. Irven DeVore, ed. *Primate Behavior* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965).

55. Ibid. Also, for primate politics in particular, see Sarah B. Hrdy, *The Woman That Never Evolved* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999 [1981]). See also Hrdy's website http://www.citrona.com/hrdy.html.

56. Thelma Rowell. *Social Behaviour of Monkeys* (New York: Penguin Books, 1972). For an excellent online article on Rowell's work with additional references, read Vinciane Despret, "Culture and Gender Do Not Dissolve into How Scientists 'Read' Nature: Thelma Rowell's Heterodoxy." In *Rebels of Life. Iconoclastic Biologists in the Twentieth Century, edited by* O. Hartman and M. Friedrich (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 340–355. http://www.vincianedespret.be/2010/04/culture-and-gender-do-not-dissolve-into-how-scientists-read-nature-thelma-rowells-heterodoxy/.

57. See Richard B. Lee and Irven DeVore, eds. *Man the Hunter* (Chicago: Aldine Atherton, 1972[1968]).

58. See Estioko-Griffin, Agnes A. Daughters of the Forest. *Natural History* 95(5):36-43 (May 1986).

59. Richard B. Lee, *The !Kung San. Men, Women and Work in a Foraging Society* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

60. Martha Ward and Monica Edelstein, *A World Full of Women*, 26.

61. Susan Seymour, "Multiple Caretaking of Infants and Young Children: An Area in Critical Need of a Feminist Psychological Anthropology," *Ethos* 32 no. (2004): 538-556.

62. Serena Nanda and Richard L. Warms, *Cultural Anthropology* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2006), 274.

63. Ester Boserup, *Women's Role in Economic Development* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970); Barbara D. Miller, *Cultural Anthropology* (Pearson/Allyn and Bacon, 2012).

64. Mauma Downie and Christina Gladwin, *Florida Farm Wives: They Help the Family Farm Survive* (Gainesville: Food and Resource Economics Department, University of Florida, 1981).

65. Judith K. Brown, "A Note on the Division of Labor by Sex," *American Anthropologist* 72 (1970):1073-78.

66. See *New York Times* series on the impact of school closures on employed women. July 21, 2021. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/21/upshot/coronavirus-careers.html. See also www.momsrising.org

67. Conrad Kottak, *Cultural Anthropology: Appreciating Cultural Diversity, 18th Edition* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2019).

68. This entire section draws on Mukhopadhyay's analysis, including material developed for her Human Sexuality courses. http://www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay/courses/AnthBioHS140/. See also Mukhopadhyay, Part II, "Culture Creates Race," especially chapter 7 and 9, in Carol Mukhopahdyay, R. Henze and Y. Moses *How Real is Race? A Sourcebook on Race, Culture and Biology* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).

69. Ibid.

70. This and subsequent material comes from C. Mukhopadhyay, Part 2, especially chapter 9, and p. 182-185, in Carol Mukhopahdyay, R. Henze and Y. Moses. *How Real is Race? A Sourcebook on Race, Culture and Biology, 2nd edition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).

71. Carol C. Mukhopadhyay, Yolanda Moses and Rosemary Henze, *How Real is Race?*, Chapter 9.

72. Annette B. Weiner, *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea* (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1987).

73. Lu Hui, "Preferential Bilateral-Cross-Cousin Marriage among the Nuosu in Liangshan," in *Perspectives on the Yi of Southwest* China, Stevan Harrell, ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).

74. Elizabeth Fernea, *Guests of the Sheik.*

75. See the film *Maasai Women* by Melanie Wallace, Sanford Low, and Michael Ambrosino (DER, 1980, 59 min.), https://store.der.org/maasai-women-p598.aspx.

76. Filmed in India, *The World Before Her* (Nisha Pahuja, 2013, 60 min.) is an excellent documentary on two alternative paths some women take in contemporary India: the Miss India path and the fundamentalist Hindu path, https://www.pbs.org/pov/watch/worldbeforeher/.

77. See https://contemporaryfamilies.org/the-way-we-still-never-were-brief-report/ and https://www.pri.org/stories/2014-09-14/singles-now-outnumber-married-people-america-and-thats-good-thing for background and links to detailed information.

78. Material in this text box was adapted from "What Can We Learn from the Na? Shattering Ideas about Family and Relationships," a TEDx FurmanU presentation by Tami Blumenfield. See also Tami Blumenfield, "Chinese Tour Groups in Europe, Chinese Tour Groups in Yunnan: Narrating a Nation in the World" *The China Beat* June 2, 2011. http://www.thechinabeat.org/?p=3494; Siobhan M. Mattison, Brooke Scelza, and Tami Blumenfield, "Paternal Investment and the Positive Effects of Fathers among the Matrilineal Mosuo (Na) of Southwest China" *American Anthropologist* 116 no. 3 (2014): 591–610; Tami Blumenfield, "Resilience in Mountainous Southwest China: Adopting a Socio-Ecological Approach to Community Change," in *Worlds in the Making: Interethnicity and the Processes of Generating Meaning in Southwestern China, Cahiers d'Extrême Asie* 23 (2014).

79. See reviews in Naomi Quinn, "Anthropological Studies of Women's Status," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 6 (1977): 181-225; Carol Mukhopadhyay and Patricia Higgins, "Anthropological Studies of the Status of Women Revisited: l977-l987" *Annual Review of Anthropology* 17 (1988):461-95.

80. Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, ed. *Woman, Culture and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974).

81. Rayna Rapp Reiter, ed. *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975); Karen Sacks, *Sisters and Wives. The Past and Future of Sexual Equality* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1979).

82. Peggy Sanday, *Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

83. For an alternative ethnographic, research based video see *N!ai: The Story of a !Kung Woman* (John Marshall and Adrienne Miesmer, DER, 1980, 59 min.). See also the work of Marjorie Shostak, *Nisa: Life and Words of a Kung Woman* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000 [1983]).

84. Carol Mukhopadhyay and Patricia Higgins, "Anthropological Studies of the Status of Women Revisited: l977-l987," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 17 (1988), 462.

85. See Joan Gero and Margaret Conkey, ed. *Engendering Archeology. Women and Prehistory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Sarah M. Nelson, *Worlds of Gender. The Archeology of Women's Lives Around the Globe* (Lanham, MD: Altamira, 2007). See also earlier volumes, Rosemary A. Joyce, *Ancient Bodies, Ancient Lives: Sex, Gender and Archeology* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2008); Barbara Voss, "Sexuality Studies in Archeology," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 37 (2008): 317-336.

86.   Johnnetta Cole, ed. *All American Women: Lines That Divide, Ties That Bind* (New York:Free Press, 1986). Louise Lamphere, Helena Ragone and Patricia Zavella, eds. *Situated Lives: Gender and Culture in Everyday Life*. (New York: Routledge, 1997).

87.   Ellen Lewin, *Lesbian Mothers: Accounts of Gender in American Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 1993). Available for free download, https://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/book/9781501720048/lesbian-mothers/#bookTabs=1

88.   See for example, Faye Ginsburg. *Contested Lives: The Abortion Debate in an American Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Dorothy Holland and Margaret Eisenhart. *Educated in Romance.* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990); Peggy Sanday, *Fraternity Gang Rape: Sex, Brotherhood, and Privilege on Campus*. (New York: New York University Press, 2007).

89.   See for example, Evelyn Blackwood. *Webs of Power: Women, Kin, and Community in a Sumatran Village* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield. 2000); Marcia Inhorn, *Infertility and Patriarchy: The Cultural Politics of Gender and Family Life in Egypt* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996); Thomas Buckley and Alma Gottlieb, ed. *Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Marcia Inhorn, and Frank Van Balen, eds. *Infertility around the Globe: New Thinking on Childlessness, Gender and Reproductive Technologies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

90.   Peggy R. Sanday, "The Socio-cultural Context of Rape: A Cross-cultural Study" *Journal of Social Issues* 37(5), 1981: 5-27. See also Conrad Kottak, *Cultural Anthropology*; Veena Das, Violence, Gender and Subjectivity, *Annual Reviews of Anthropology* 37 (2008):283-299; and Tulsi Patel, ed. S*ex-Selective Abortion in India. Gender, Society and New Reproductive Technologies* (New Delhi, India: Sage Publications, 2007). See also other Sanday work, *Fraternity Gang Rape*.

91.   Carol C. Mukhopadhyay and Susan Seymour, ed. *Women, Education and Family Structure in India* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

92.   The following analysis was developed by Mukhopadhyay in scholarly papers and lectures notes. Cf. citations in other endnotes.

93.   An example of this pattern from Iran is Mary E. Hegland, *Days of Revolution: Political Unrest in an Iranian Village* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015).

94.   Conrad Kottak, *Cultural Anthropology.*

95.   E. Friedl, *Women and Men: An Anthropologist's View;* C. Mukhopadhyay and Patricia Higgins, "Anthropological Studies of the Status of Women Revisited: 1977–1987." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 17 (1988): 461–495.

96.   One 1970s male pilot, when asked about why there were no women pilots, said, without thinking, "Because women aren't strong enough to fly the plane!" He then realized what he'd said and laughed. From Mukhopadhyay, field notes, 1980.

97.   Ann Stoler, "Making Empire Respectable. The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in Twentieth-century Colonial Cultures," in *Situated Lives. Gender and Culture in Everyday Life*, ed. Louise Lamphere, H. Ragone, and P. Zavella, 373–399 (New York: Routledge, 1997).

98.   Peggy Sanday, *Women at the Center: Life in a Modern Matriarchy* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2002).

99.   Mukhopadhyay, lecture notes, Gender and Culture.

100.   See for instance Annette B. Weiner, *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea*; Martha Ward and Monica Edelstein, *A World Full of Women;* Carolyn B. Brettell and Carolyn F. Sargent, eds. *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective.*

101.   E. Franklin Frazier, "The Negro Family in Bahia, Brazil" *American Sociological Review* 7 no. 4 (1942): 476–477; E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1939), 125. For the opposing view, see Mark Alan Healey, "'The Sweet Matriarchy of Bahia': Ruth Landes' Ethnography of Race and Gender." *Disposition: The Cultural Practice of Latinamericanism* II 23 no. 50 (1998): 101.

102.   See Melville J. Herskovits, "The Negro in Bahia, Brazil: A Problem in Method" *American Sociological Review* 8 no. 4 (1943): 395–396; Edison Carneiro, "Letters from Edison Carneiro to Ruth Landes: Dating from September 28, 1938 to March 14, 1946" (Washington, DC: Box 2 Ruth Landes Papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, 1938); Ruth Landes, *The City of Women* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1947).

103.   Ruth Landes, "Fetish Worship in Brazil" *The Journal of American Folklore* 53, no. 210 (1940): 261

104.   Ruth Landes, *The City of Women* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1947), 31–32, 37

105.   Ruth Landes, "Negro Slavery and Female Status" *African Affairs* 52 no. 206 (1953): 55. Also, Ruth Landes, "A Cult Matriarchate and Male Homosexuality" *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 35 no. 3 (1940): 386–387,

393–394; Ruth Landes, "Negro Slavery and Female Status," *African Affairs* 52 no. 206 (1953): 55–57.

106. Cheryl Sterling, "Women-Space, Power, and the Sacred in Afro-Brazilian Culture," *The Global South* 4 no. 1 (2010): 71–93.

107. Nandini Gunewardena and Ann Kingsolver, *The Gender of Globalization: Women Navigating Cultural and Economic Marginalities* (Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press, 2008).

108. Women's political power, when exerted, may go unnoticed by the global media. For an example, see the documentary *Pray the Devil to Hell* on women's role in forcing Liberian President Charles Taylor from office and leading to the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as President. For an excellent documentary on some of the alternative paths contemporary women in India are taking, see *The World Before Her*.

109. See the excellent film *The Purity Myth: The Virginity Movement's War Against Women* (2011, 45 min.). Available through Media Education Foundation, https://shop.mediaed.org/the-purity-myth-p160.aspx.

110. The Dobbs decision reversed both *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey*, the decisions that originally asserted the fundamental right to an abortion prior to the viability of the fetus. Justice Roberts did not support the majority on this decision. However, he did join them in a 6-3 decision that upheld Mississippi's abortion law at issue in the case. See , among others, Cornell Law School summary: https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/dobbs_v._jackson_women%27s_health_organization_%282022%29 Also Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dobbs_v._Jackson_Women%27s_Health_Organization#Supreme_Court

111. For analyses of reproductive rights debates see UC Davis Law Professor Mary Ziegler, https://law.ucdavis.edu/people/mary-ziegler.For the impact of the Dobbs decision, see Guttmacher Institute, https://www.guttmacher.org/state-policy/explore/abortion-policy-absence-roe. For the text of the Dobbs decision, see https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/19-1392_6j37.pdf. For an example of election impacts, see https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/27/us/abortion-bans-nebraska-south-carolina.html. For more on state-level so-called Trigger Laws see https://19thnews.org/2022/07/when-do-abortion-bans-trigger-laws-take-effect/. Most major reproductive rights and civil liberties organizations, such as Center for Reproductive Rights and ACLU provide regular updates.

112. See for example the 2023 statement by The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists on gestational development and the capacity for pain as well as other resources on its website. https://www.acog.org/advocacy/facts-are-important/gestational-development-capacity-for-pain.

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114. For more information on the initial Trump video, see http://time.com/4523755/donald-trump-leaked-tape-impact. For coverage of the women accusing Trump and his response, see http://www.cnn.com/2016/10/14/politics/trump-women-accusers/index.html. For coverage of Trumps' response to the allegations, see http://time.com/4531872/donald-trump-sexual-assault-accusers-attack.

115. Carly Wayne, Nicholas Valentino and Marzia Oceno. 2016. "How Sexism Drives Support for Donald Trump." *Washington Post*, October 23. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/10/23/how-sexism-drives-support-for-donald-trump. Also see Libby Nelson. 2016. "Hostility toward Women Is One of the Strongest Predictors of Trump Support." *Vox*. November 1. http://www.vox.com/2016/11/1/13480416/trump-supporters-sexism. For an article that also covers research by psychologists, see Emily Crockett. 2016. "Why Misogyny Won." *Vox*. November 15. http://www.vox.com/identities/2016/11/15/13571478/trump-president-sexual-assault-sexism-misogyny-won.

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117. For the role of misogyny see: Why Misogyny Won. https://www.vox.com/identities/2016/11/15/13571478/trump-president-sexual-assault-sexism-misogyny-won. Mark DiCamillo of the Field Poll suggested one reason

polls were wrong is that female Trump voters hid their actual voting preferences from pollsters. DiCamillo is quoted in Debra J. Saunders, "How Herding Blinded Polls to Trump's Big Win." San Francisco Chronicle, 2016 (November 13), E3; cf. https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/saunders/article/How-herding-blinded-polls-to-Trump-s-big-win-10609374.php.

118. For a critique of those who "blame" Euro-American ("White") women for Hillary Clinton's defeat, see the article by Kelly Dittmar, "No, Women Didn't Abandon Clinton, Nor Did She Fail to Win Their Support." *Ms. Magazine*, 2016 (November 14). https://msmagazine.com/2016/11/14/women-didnt-abandon-clinton/.

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121. For global parliamentary figures see: 2020 https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=10&year=2020 and 2023: https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=4&year=2023; For Global Leadership data see: https://www.theglobalist.com/women-on-top-of-the-political-world/ For data on U.S. Mayors see: https://www.statista.com/chart/28763/female-mayors-us/.

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